JARNEGAN

JIM TULLY

JARNEGAN

BEGGARS OF LIFE

A Hobo Autobiography

by JIM TULLY

"In the thirty chapters of this book, we get that number of vivid personal narratives . . . a brilliant depiction of people who once were men, and still are."—*New York World*

$3.00

JARNEGAN

By

JIM TULLY

Author of

Beggars of Life

New York

Albert & Charles Boni

1926

Copyright, 1926, by
ALBERT & CHARLES BONI, INC.

Manufactured in the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"Men and women and the earth and all upon it are simply to be taken as they are, and the investigation of their past and present and future shall be done with perfect candor. . . . As soon as histories are properly told, there is no more need of Romances."

—Walt Whitman

Preface to the 1885 *edition of*
Leaves of Grass

JARNEGAN

JARNEGAN

CHAPTER I

JAPPER had drifted into Flannnery's saloon on River Street, where Jack Muldoon stood at the bar. A big rowdy, with the heart of a traitor, was Japper. He had bragged all over Ironton that he did not give a damn for Muldoon—that somebody had to post bills—and no one had a right to tell him whether he could work or not. He was an honest man. Muldoon or no other man could keep him from working.

Flannery turned white and laid down the bar-cloth when he saw Muldoon look at Japper. The latter, tipsy, ordered a large tumbler of beer at the bar. He then stood defiantly near the red jumbo stove. The two men, with the bitterest of hatred, faced each other. The room became tense, as though the

air within contained bottled madness. Flannery edged up to Muldoon——

"Please don't start nothin' in here, Mul—will you?"

"Don't worry—I won't tackle him in here, Flannery," was the answer.

Flannery said, "Thanks," and went on wiping the bar nervously.

Japper, unable to bear the strain longer, yelled——

"Hello, Mul—how's my little ol' billposter pal?"

"Go to hell you black snake," was the answer.

Japper threw the heavy tumbler at Muldoon, who dodged, and it smashed against the ice box at the end of the bar.

In a single bound Muldoon faced Japper——

"Now, Jap—you can take my job an' you can post bills on the God-damn clouds if you want to, but we're goin' to battle it out this night—NOW." The last word was a roar.

"If you're able to post bills Monday, it's because you can hit harder than I can; God-damn your black heart. I'm goin' to shake you to death like a rat."

Japper stepped forward—suddenly sober——

"You lousy shanty-Irish bum—I'm one guy you can't lick—you nor your damn shanty-Irish brothers. I'll battle you NOW."

Flannery rushed out——

"Please, Jack—your word——"

"We'll go down to the depot—in the old place," said Muldoon, turning to the onlookers—"Go easy now—don't all follow in a bunch—we don't want the cops to get next."

They arrived at a secluded place beyond the depot over which hung an arc light.

Muldoon threw his coat in the dust—Japper did the same. Then Muldoon walked over toward Japper——

"Now, it's to a finish, Japper—everything goes—bitin', kickin'—everything—I won't

ask for mercy an' don't you ask for it—because by God if you do I'll kill you—I'll send you to your God, you scab-face——"

Japper sprang upward. A master of so-called "rough-house" fighting so prevalent in Ohio saloons at the time, Muldoon remained on the defensive until the light shone in Japper's eyes. He then vaulted at him—heavy fists flying.

Japper's strong jaw clattered under the blows. He smashed out at Muldoon and sent him to his knees. Muldoon rose and ran into a heavy punch on the mouth. He backed away and circled until the light hit Japper's eyes again. He sprang forward. They pounded each other's kidneys, and tore the clothing from each other's bodies. They bit at each other's necks in the clinches. They tore at each other's hair. They kicked at each other in the groin.

Their feet trampled in the deep dust which rolled upward, and gave them the color of yellow specters under the weird light.

Muldoon crashed into the dust. Japper stood for a second watching him as a tired tiger watches a fallen deer. Then he pounced upon him and grabbed at his throat. A guttural sound came from Muldoon. His eyes popped. His magnificent body, now naked to the waist, strained against the closing fingers of Japper until it seemed his muscles would snap. Downward went Muldoon's hand until it stopped at a vital spot. Japper gave an agonized shriek and jumped to his feet—half-double with pain—staggering backward.

Muldoon—a torn and bloody figure—hair straggling, jaws sagging—mouth drooling, went forward mumbling and groaning——

"I'll twist your damn life out—I'll pound the fear of God in your heart forever—I'll—" They were at each other's throats. Japper sprang upward—Muldoon's fist shot into the air. Japper came to earth—his toes turned inward—his knees knocking together——

The crowd had edged in until the fighters had about twelve feet in which to move.

They stood close and slugged, then clinched in a tangle of naked arms. Muldoon threw his head back as Japper tried to pull it forward.

"He wants to bite his ear off," whispered a spectator. His head went forward suddenly—Japper leaned down as though fumbling with his mouth for the ear.

A fist swished upward—like a heavy dynamite-driven projectile shot out of the ground. Another fist swished inward. One caught Japper in the pit of the stomach. Another broke his jaw.

His feet turned inward again—his knees knocked together, then he fell limp and wriggled, once.

Blood dripped into Muldoon's eyes. He saw many Jappers sprawled out in front of him. He saw a man lean down—and heard a voice as if from the sky say—"*God—he's dead.*"

Then the scurrying of feet; the lambs leaving the dead and live tiger alone.

Muldoon leaned over the fallen Japper, whose heart was as still as a rural gravestone.

Paralyzed for a moment, he stood erect. *He was a murderer.* He saw himself sitting in the electric chair at Columbus—his head shaved—the juice pouring into his brain and body——

Even in that moment Muldoon did not crack.

He looked at Japper—his eyes full of dust, his head twisted, his jaw hanging limp—a leer on his battered and vicious face.

He would have to do something—go home—it would be hard on his wife. She was very religious—and the baby—that was tough—her father a murderer.

He could not find his hat. At last, locating his coat, he put it over his naked shoulders. Through the night he trudged, his

brain a madness reaching for sanity, his battered head aching, his eyes on the ground.

He crossed the railroad tracks. Why not wait until a train came and jump under it. His life was all gone, anyhow. He sat for a while on the cindered bank and nursed the thought. No train came.

CHAPTER II

HE stumbled over his baby's wagon in the yard. His family had hurried to his young wife with the news. She waited for him in their tumble-down pine shack at the edge of a junk yard.

When he opened the door she met him with— "Oh, God, Jack—what'll I do—think of my poor baby."

"It's not what you'll do—it's what the hell will I do—where's the baby?" he asked.

"In the bedroom," she answered dully.

He hurried in and stood by its bed. Looking at it for a moment, he stroked the hair back from its forehead. The hand that had sent Japper to eternity now trembled. He looked about the room for his black alley cat, Bum.

"Here, Bum—here, Bum," he called. The cat was not near.

He turned again to the sleeping child.

The police entered. Four of them stood about the room with revolvers in their hands. Muldoon looked at them.

"Hands up," the tallest officer commanded.

"A—ll right," said Muldoon indifferently. "Do you think I'm Jesse James?"

The child slept on. The crying wife stood back. The police marched the stunned prisoner to the jail as a lad. One of them had worked with Muldoon in the nail mill. "If you want Jerry Brannigan, I'll call him for you, Mul," he said.

"All right, Joe—please do."

Brannigan, a weazened little criminal lawyer, one of the best in Ohio, with a tongue like a razor and a heart like mush, came at once to Muldoon's cell. "Keep quiet, Jack—not a word out of you," he ordered. "We'll get everything figured so's if they send you to Columbus, we'll be ready."

The shrewd lawyer, with his finger in

every political pie, had always liked Muldoon. He, too, had labored in the nail mill. He, too, knew the psychology of the toiler.

When the time came for the trial, it took weeks to get a jury. The State did not want jurymen from the ranks of union labor. But Brannigan got two professional men on the jury he had known from boyhood. They had, like himself, left the mills early. He knew their private sentiments.

He told Muldoon—"They got to stick you somethin'—'cause you did somethin', but it won't be worse'n manslaughter, and I'm sure they'll recommend leniency—extenuatin' circumstances—an' I'll be workin' to get you out before ye get in even——"

Before the jury the thin little lawyer stood, tapping the ends of his fingers with a lead pencil——

"Suppose, gentlemen—" he said—"that Jack here was your boy—and he'd been caught in the net of circumstances as Jack has. This lad has always worked, gentlemen

—has shared with his family and everybody. There are invisible laws, gentlemen, which are bigger than man-made laws. In a time of war Japper would have been shot, gentlemen——

"Washington cried when he was betrayed by Arnold, gentlemen—and Japper betrayed a cause. Those among you, gentlemen, who, like myself, have labored in the mines and the mills—know how dear that cause is. We ask you, gentlemen, for understanding. It was not premeditated, gentlemen—it was in the heat of battle. I ask you again, gentlemen, for fairness and understanding." He looked at his two boyhood friends and finished.

The jury brought in a verdict of manslaughter with a recommendation for mercy. The judge sentenced Muldoon to ten years in the Columbus penitentiary with a chance for pardon.

On the way to the penitentiary Muldoon's head ached with a dull throb. That journey

laid the foundation of the wall he since built around himself. The papers mentioned his indifference. It was merely the born actor in a drama too large for him.

He would have killed himself during the first month had he a chance. Perhaps his attitude toward women developed at that time.

He had never loved his wife—he had been caught in the matrimonial net easily.

She was religious, full of animal spirit and the riddle of sex. He had just returned from a long circus trip during which time uncoarsened women were none too plentiful. Blinded by sex—he went into marriage with the nonchalant manner of a sailor going upstairs with a prostitute.

After the first week he realized that his wife had only a superficial lure for him. There was in the man a deep strain of the romantic. The wife became common—the bed a marriage duty.

The child came in nine months. Mrs.

Muldoon worried for fear it would come sooner and ruin her reputation. This incident appealed to Muldoon's sense of irony. He knew that the old ladies of Ironton were counting the calendar on his wife. And with quiet laughter he kept hoping that the child would come before the nine months were up. He remained home that spring and worked at a starvation wage—lived in his little shack and heard the endless whining of an illiterate woman with child.

Jack Muldoon, born above his kind, resented the terrible trap. He would go away the next spring with the circus—things would drift some way. But she did not believe in divorce. The chain welded by a temporary desire would be around his neck the rest of his life. He rebelled—but the idea of the baby held him.

When it was born—he loved it—along with Bum, the cat, blacker than coal at midnight. Long would he lie on the carpeted lounge with the cat and the baby. Money

was never to bring him more than these two brought him. They were perhaps the nearest he ever came to unselfish love in his life. His affection for the Brannigan brothers, Stanley Ketchell, the great pugilist, and many women he knew on the scarlet trail, was something different. They were all people like himself, blended with defiance and the roar of life. The baby and the cat were dependent on him alone—he was all gentleness with them. When the cat returned one morning after a night's adventure, its ears badly chewed, Muldoon got hot water and soap and washed them—saying——

"Poor old bad-luck brother of mine. Keep away from them shanty-Irish cats, Bum—they always have to go to confession on Saturday." The cat meowed and licked his hand, then went over and laid by the side of the baby.

Muldoon's wife did not go near the penitentiary. It was no place to take a baby. Jerry Brannigan, to please him, had taken

the cat to his own house. Muldoon often wished he could have taken the baby.

He thought he would go mad for the first month. The two Brannigans kept his heart from completely breaking. Jerry came from Ironton twice a month. Patsy worked on a Columbus newspaper.

The deputy sheriff had said to him while removing the handcuffs after they boarded the train for the penitentiary:

"I'll not keep you handcuffed, Jack. I'll trust you man to man. It's better to do your jolt with Jerry Brannigan behind you than try for the getaway. You'll come out o' this, kid—you ain't the breakin' kind. It ain't murder to kill a scab, anyhow."

This made the ride more bearable.

When Muldoon arrived at the prison gates the low gray building revolted him. He had heard of it all through his boyhood. He had once seen the pictures of men executed there. Dealers in the culture of Ohio sold books for fifty cents with the history of the prison and

such pictures in them. The strangled men all seemed to have their collars out of place—as if the rope had slipped. One had a smile—which stopped before it spread across his face.

They walked slowly up the steps long worn by the feet of thousands of prisoners for seventy-five years. The deputy stopped to put the handcuffs on Muldoon. "It'll look better," he said.

The prisoner gazed about at the grimy city. The deputy waited while waves of feeling passed over Jack Muldoon's face. Then, sighing once and shrugging his shoulders, he smiled wearily to the deputy—and said——

"All right, Ed—thanks for bein' decent—I'm ready."

They walked into the building.

At one side was a clerk—a trusty in uniform. He took down the names of arrivals in an immense book.

"Your name?" asked the trusty.

"Jack Muldoon," was the answer.

Once the name was taken a number was given—number 44733.

The leathery-faced deputy bade him good-by after turning in his commitment papers.

The trusty, a forger, was insolent to the new prisoner. He treated him disdainfully until a guard came, but the trusty was respectful to his more illiterate brother in the pay of the State.

"The Warden wishes to speak to 44733 here," he said, turning to his large book.

It was the usual "heart-to-heart" talk which many wardens have with new prisoners.

The guard turned and said brusquely, "Come on," and Muldoon followed. He saw a man leaving another door in the warden's office as he entered. It looked like Jerry Brannigan, his lawyer.

The guard stood outside.

"Well, Muldoon—" began the Warden, in that tone of severity which he felt the na-

ture of his position made him employ—"you have been delivered over to the care of the State—to expiate a crime. I do not wish to be unduly severe. It is my aim to restore men to society with new ideals and new instincts for service. You will learn our rules here in due time. Two months each year will be deducted from your sentence for good behavior. If you served the full time it would be about seven years. Much can happen in less time than that. Mr. Brannigan has faith in you. And so long as Mr. Brannigan has faith in a man—so have I."

Jack Muldoon choked back the tears in his throat. The Warden stood up—a fat, flabby, tired man. He wore a bediamonded Masonic lodge pin in the lapel of his coat, a little mustache and a long goatee. He twisted his head occasionally and breathed heavily with chronic asthma.

A lithographed picture of McKinley was above his desk. By its side was the map of

Ohio with the pictures of its governors around the edges.

The Warden pressed a button. The guard entered and took 44733 away.

The new prisoner was next taken to the Captain of the Guard. That individual was Irish-American like himself, and overbearing. A more detailed history of him was taken.

"Manslaughter—eh—bad man—with a wallop—well—we'll take care o' ye." He stared at the good-looking young prisoner with narrow eyes. He went from the Captain's office to the photograph gallery. It was a horrible room from the walls of which stared distorted faces. A profile and front view picture of him was taken. From the photograph gallery he was led to the barber shop. His hair was clipped close and his face shaved. The man who wielded the razor was serving life for murdering his wife with such an instrument. He was obsequious—even fearful of the guard, who carried

a heavy oak stick loaded with iron at the end. No word was said to the prisoner during any of the proceedings—only the most terse questions were asked in other departments.

He was next taken to the clothing room where he was given the regulation uniform—at that time, striped like a zebra. From there he was taken to the Bertillon room and stood against the wall. His number was adjusted on a movable rod so that it was even with his chest. It was then photographed, and every portion of his body measured and inspected. All was written down—his finger prints taken, the marks of his feet, the tiny mole on his left arm. His record was again taken with the opinion of the judge who sentenced him included.

He was then returned to the Captain of the Guard who gave him a book of rules.

He was then marched to the "yard" to await his place in the routine of the prison.

He was like a man walking in his sleep.

One thing ran around in his mind. He had glanced at the large book in which the trusty had written his name. There were four Muldoons among the prisoners. So that was why he was 44733. He wondered if he were the forty-fourth thousand prisoner, as the guard left him among several other new arrivals.

The "yard," as it was called, was a level cement floor, one hundred feet square. Thirty-feet-high cement walls enclosed it. Iron banisters with sharp points were on top of the walls. Along these banisters the guards walked day and night.

The prisoners were allowed to talk in the yard. But 44733 had nothing to say to his newly discovered brothers in the curriculum of discipline. He stood apart, alone. The nebula of the past three months suddenly cleared as he stood there. It was like the exploding of a bombshell in his brain. He staggered like a drunken man and fell against the wall. Taught from childhood

that a prison was an eternal disgrace, his dread was not only of the present. It was mixed with the years to come. The other prisoners looked at him vaguely in the manner of men who had problems of their own.

Jack Muldoon did not know how long he had remained against the wall. He lay, one elbow resting on the cement floor, and looked at the sky.

Years later when he directed "Iron Bars," he made the convict hero famous as a character actor. No one was allowed on the set while he made the picture.

A guard came and led him to his cell. Still dazed, Muldoon walked through the evil-smelling building—all around him a wilderness of gray iron bars. He remained in his cell until the next day. Too tired to think—he stared upward until early morning. At last the heavy weight fell from his brain. He slept.

He was never able to forget the first dawn in prison. The many noises of the men

around him. His sensibilities were always keen—and close contact with prisoners horrified him.

After breakfast, he was assigned to the chair factory. This consisted of four large rooms. Muldoon was placed in the cane department. The prisoners sat on a long bench, weaving the cane bottoms for chairs. The guard sat on a high chair, a ponderous fat man, scarce able to move. The prisoners were forbidden to talk—but they often did, anyhow—out of the sides of their mouths.

When the heavy guard heard human speech he would shoot a piece of bird shot in the direction from which it came. He often hit an innocent man on the ear or neck. The shot would sting like a needle pricking, but the prisoner would not look around.

The merit system was something to consider. A prisoner upon arrival was started at C. This meant that if he obeyed the rules he was given a B—which allowed him five days of his sentence deducted each month

for good behavior. If he was consistently well-behaved, he was in due course of time placed in Class A—this allowed him ten days off his sentence each month. If he made a misstep, five days were added to his sentence.

Silent and morose, Muldoon absorbed the slang of the prison as the months passed. The "big house" was the penitentiary itself. The hospital was the "boogie." A "screw" was a guard. The "big screw" was the deputy warden, who really had charge of the prison. The prison physician was called the "croaker." The food was known as "mess."

Muldoon observed the crawling humility on the faces of most prisoners. The negro convicts were more cheerful and less afraid.

After six months in the chair factory Muldoon was made an "A" prisoner and removed to the blacksmith shop where he was a blacksmith's helper.

Though all the workers were convicts, the task was more to his liking. There

were times in the shop—when the miasma of prison happiness—forgetfulness—would overtake him. The sun would shine during the afternoon on the hot metal and dull it to cherry red. Helping to fashion iron and steel gave him a chance for expression, though he knew not the term at the period. He could even see out of the sooty barred windows. Month after month his great muscles swung a ten-pound sledge. The hated guards were not conspicuous during work hours. The helpers learned to talk like freemen.

Especially was this so when the noise of pounding sledges and hammers had immediately died down.

The blacksmith whom Muldoon helped was a man with a penchant for whipping inoffensive policemen. He weighed two hundred pounds, and was a master workman. His only failing was—he would immediately get drunk on each pay-day and go in search of a policeman. He had once whipped five

officers in a room, and it remained the climax of his epic. He would chortle over it as he directed the swinging of the sledges upon the anvil. But at last, he had killed a policeman, and was, like Muldoon, serving time for manslaughter. He fashioned iron with a five-pound hammer, and between the blows of the sledges, he held true to the anvil and wielded the hammer at the same time with the precision of machine-gun fire.

He was released before Muldoon and wrote him two letters from Cleveland, and one from Pittsburgh. He promised Muldoon to make him a first-class blacksmith in six months. Muldoon did not answer the letters. He had never written a letter in his life. Even when Jerry Brannigan told him that his wife had left Ironton with the baby, he wrote no letter. His face became more sternly etched, his movements more machine-like. That was all.

He suffered more keenly at night. A light shone feebly at the end of each corridor of

pain. The guards paced up and down—softly like cats. Each hour, all through the night, a guard could be heard shouting on the outer wall—"Eleven o'clock and all's well—twelve o'clock and all's well—one o'clock and all's well." Ordinary words in themselves, they had the power of taking on a fiendish monotony with the imaginative convict who heard them hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after weary year.

Early dawn would rumble with the noises of the outside world. Every morning at four he could hear a Toledo and Ohio Central engine screeching away to the mighty freedom. His thoughts followed it westward.

His longing for women was the dominating impulse. He saw their bodies between the blows of his sledge. Desire became at night a madness with him. He would clutch the iron bars as though they were the arms of beautiful women.

Lying, a passion-swept convict on his cot,

he recalled the glad days with women of the circus. He remembered a little creole under a Louisiana moon. He named over and over again in his mind all the women with whom he had been intimate. He recalled their actions at the time. His mind even magnified the first month of marriage with his wife.

Nude pictures of actresses torn from magazines adorned the walls of his cell. He met a famous actress years later. Her picture had been on his wall. She was now wrinkling like a lemon in the sun.

Ready to give her favors to the great director, he would have none of the woman whom he had loved in imagination many times.

Saltpeter was mixed with the food to quell passion. It had no effect on Muldoon. As well try to tame a leopard by giving it milk.

He woke up once with hands tangled in his baby's hair. Bum, the black cat, was purring at his side. Over him came the fierce madness when he found they were not in the

cot with him. He jumped to the floor of his iron cage and screamed——

"God-damn you, Japper—I'll murder you again in hell." He moaned dismally like a heavy wind through rain-soaked trees.

The guard flashed his lantern in the cell and said—"Wha's amatter—44733?"

Muldoon fell on the bed and made no answer.

He was devoid of hope at times. His heart pumped water within him. But he survived the great silence of the prison at midnight when cyclones tore across the valley of his soul. With veins swollen like whipcords he often conquered desire for women. He endured the cheap trickery of convicts and guards and had compassion for them—between snarls.

He would have tried to escape once had not Jerry Brannigan's brother Patsy called one Sunday afternoon.

Two of the three men who made the break were shot to death. The third was captured

later—the look of a beaten bloodhound on his face. Muldoon said to him afterward, "Your two buddies are better off—they're free." Shot on a rainy night that flooded rivers, perhaps they thought the bullets were raindrops. Jack Muldoon thought at the time how good it would have been to die with the hard-pounding rain in his face—beating out the wrinkles of prison forever.

Gloom filled the prison each time a man was sent to the electric chair. It was whispered how they stood the shocks the State murderer sent through them.

A winter of idleness came to the prison. The crafts on the outside had complained of the cheap labor done inside the walls—that products were made and sold so cheap that freemen on the outside could not compete.

The prisoners loafed from morning until night until the trouble was adjusted.

Muldoon of the driving energy sat still for hours. He tried to write letters until his fingers ached. He never finished one.

He heard of another prisoner by the name of O. Henry. He had been told that he became famous writing stories while a prisoner there. He saw the cell the gifted jailbird had occupied. He inquired later if O. Henry had written a record of his prison years. Hearing he had not, he lost all interest in O. Henry.

Muldoon always dreaded nine o'clock. One by one the prisoners marched—each stepping out of line when his cell was reached—birds with the clipped wings and the blunted beaks turning into their cages. He often read on a new prisoner's face deep lines the night had written.

Then the churning emotions at Jerry Brannigan's news of his wife's departure with the baby. The murder that paraded in his heart in the guise of self-pity. His petty vengeance was at last swept away by a deluge of cynical tolerance.

Jerry Brannigan had brought him a picture at this time. As no one could hand a

prisoner anything, the guard sitting at the end of the room like a stupid king on a throne, the prisoner on one side of a table, the visitor on the other—their hands not touching, Brannigan asked permission of the guard and then handed Muldoon the picture, saying——

"It ain't like Him, Jack, I don't suppose. I'd give a lot to have a real one of Him like He was. He was the darlinest devil that ever lived, Jack. His was the great mercy, me boy. He was so big the ocean couldn't drown Him. And remember, Jack—He was a Jew—a Jew who died for the Irish——"

Muldoon placed the picture in his cell beneath those of the nude actresses.

CHAPTER III

HE was "sprung" from the Ohio Penitentiary in two years and six months. Every political line was pulled, and every trade possible made. Brannigan controlled votes, and the Union Labor vote was not a small one in Ohio. The judge who sentenced him said in a letter to the Governor—that in view of all the circumstances in the case, Jack Muldoon had been punished enough.

Brannigan was a man with the shriveled and cynical face of a gambler who had lost. And yet—he gave the world away.

Jerry Brannigan met him at the prison gate. They went to Ironton. "It's much I want to talk to you, lad," Brannigan said. "Now, the first thing is—change your name. You're through with the Muldoons and everything Muldooney. You don't belong

to them—they were merely the carts that dumped you in the parade. You've got it in ye, Jack—I don't know where you got it, but you have—and I don't know where in the hell you'll go—but you're goin'—*God*—and it's all a mystery—a kid from a gang of Irish ragpickers—ye took your beatin' like a sport. Japper's better off dead—he had a black heart with red scabs on it."

As they walked down High Street toward the depot together, Brannigan said, "Ye never whimpered, Jack—and ye was grateful for Patsy an' me—but that ain't it, Jack—what I wanta say is this— All the business of livin's a bluff. The only man that wins is the man that loses. Now you're startin' clean—hands all washed—they've sent ye through hell—you can throw brimstone at them now. There is much for to live and much for to see, and the water of life is all around ye. Go and wade in it. Ye with your heavy jaws and your big shoulders and your hands like hams and your soul

that's known persecution—kape your head up. There's men born to go up and men born to go down—and it's nobody's damn business but the good Lord God's, so why in hell should we quibble. Now I want ye to win—so's people in Ironton can say—'Jerry Brannigan's a tin-cent lawyer, but he saw the big somethin' in Jack Muldoon.' "

They arrived in Ironton near midnight.

"I'll be back to your house soon—Jerry. Let me take a walk alone."

"Sure," replied Jerry. "I'll have my housekeeper fix some coffee and some wee snips o' the brandy and we'll talk till the train comes."

Jack Muldoon walked to the little shack where he had once lived. A gaslight shone dimly down the smudgy street which no one traveled. The crooked, dwarfed and starved trees resembled huge spider-webs in the murk. Muldoon could hear no sound save the echo of his feet as he walked.

He turned in at the broken gate. With a

long-ago memory he looked around for Bum. Smiling drearily he pushed the sagging front door open and walked into the house. It had a musty odor. He walked through the rooms with heavy feet, and paused at the bedroom window. Leaning there, the ill-fitting suit on his muscular frame, his lips pressed together, his forehead wrinkled, he thought of Jerry Brannigan's words in Columbus—"The only man that wins is the man that loses." He laughed—"Loses what?—gains what? Jerry's fine—I love him—but a soft heart—a soft head——"

Bill Dunnigan, the blacksmith, was the boy—a snoot full of liquor and out after a policeman—both of them loose after cracking men's jaws.

The dead Japper pulled aside the curtains of his mind and stood before him, a red kerchief around his neck, tobacco juice running out of the corners of his mouth. "Hello, you scabby rotter," Muldoon called aloud in the empty room. His voice echoed weirdly

back. Muldoon started, and thrust out his knuckle-cracked hands as though Japper were near.

In the corner of the room once stood the bed upon which Colleen was conceived. He walked across and stood there.

Instantly a baby girl led a strange procession—a black cat—the Brannigans—the blacksmith—the warden—the prisoner who had escaped for a day—Japper—his mother, with the tired look and the corn cob pipe—his father, with the paralyzed shuffle, mouth drooping and open.

Less than a mile away his mother and father were feeding the worms.

The fancy came to him—the worms getting drunk on the body of his father—a stout fat worm standing on its tail in his brain and saying—"Brother worms—we now feast upon a gentleman named Timothy Muldoon. That which goes to your brain and makes you feel like eagles of mud is but forty kinds of whisky which Tim had the good sense to

consume. He now lies here among us in consecrated ground, and were it not for the liquor which he drank, he would be a damn poor feast. Eh, brother worms—long have we crawled through the subterranean driveways and you will agree with me one and all that there is no food under the sod like a drunken Irishman or a bishop in consecrated ground. It is my ambition to crawl to Rome under the Atlantic next year and wait for the body of a pope.

"My mother told me of a worm in the Middle Ages who feasted on a dead pope and died suddenly of poison. But all this has been changed so I have been told. The only danger now is that if a pope dies holy his bones are shriveled and his bloodless flesh is tough." The worm looked down at the brain of Timothy which resembled worms that did not crawl. His talk had made no impression. The other worms kept on eating.

"Poor old daffy dad," thought Jack Mul-

doon aloud. The words came back—"Poor old daffy dad."

With a sudden impulse he slammed the front door and walked out of the yard. "What in hell did I go there for—all the damn Irish were born sentimental."

He swung his heavy shoulders through the night, talking to himself. The sense of freedom made him feel like flying. Overhead were the stars and the white clouds sailing. No one was about in Ironton. He could hear the noise of the nail mill, like the roar of lions, far off. He walked past the unpainted home of the Muldoons with the broken palings in the fence around it. No feeling of affection for those living within touched him —"Through with 'em all—that's me. Damn them."

His mother came again—"They worried poor old mother in the grave—the mice"—and swiftly walking, his mother accompanied him—"Ah, Jackie boy—ye're mother's pet —how smart ye are—and Father O'Houli-

han says how well ye serve him at the altar, glory be—and never a Latin word do ye miss, and ye get the music from the bell when Jesus comes to the altar again, again, to save poor sinners like ye and me." More swiftly he trudged through the night. The worn woman in the calico dress and the corn-cob pipe kept pace with him. "Remember yere mother, Jackie, an' be a good boy—for it's as Jerry Brannigan an' Father O'Houlihan says—'Ye ain't like the rest o' thim'—Indade I know, Jackie boy—a mother knows. When ye were a wee little tot, the good Father says ye asked him questions he couldn't answer—a burnin' brain was in yer head he says—an' some day ye'd drive the Protestants from Irelan' or die with the guns in yer throat. Oh, Jackie boy—so much do I expect of ye—an' so much will I watch ye from the gates of heaven whin I'm gone that ye jist can't go wrong. An' if ye do, I'll say to God—'Oh, dear Lord—he's my baby boy with the burnin' brain in his head, as

Father O'Houlihan says. Ye need boys like him down there, dear Great Lord Jesus—boys who can help ye wipe the sins of the world away—boys who kin take the childer of men and patch up their breakin' hearts—boys who kin take the fallin' women an' make of thim nuns in thy gracious sight. Look at 'im, dear Lord Jesus, wit' the heavy jaws of him an' the curly big head of him—an' the fine big eyes o' him—the eyes of his uncle, dear Lord Jesus—him who served thy Holy cause as a praest in Belfast an' fought the Black Irish with his own mighty fists an' says to thim—"I'll tare down the church an' murder ye wit' the bricks if ye so much as dare to look at the chalice which contains His precious blood." O Lord, don't ye remember when he stood there, the wind from the lakes of Killarney blowin' his cassock about—holdin' the chalice up—an' sayin', "I will die a thousand deaths for my God—drive yere nails in my heart an' yere bullets in my head an' stab my quiverin' an' dyin'

flesh with yere Black Irish tongues—but here I stand with the chalice of my God's blood held high like him who said to Saint Pater—'Upon this rock I shall build my church, an' the gates o' hell shall not prevail against it.' " Indade ye remember his uncle, dear Lord Jesus—he was my own brother he was, he was, an' proud was I of him an' heart breakin' did I leave him—oh Lord, indade—what a man was Father Jarnegan—indade he'd ha' been the pope had he lived—but ye saw fit to call 'im home to sit at thy right hand and defend Yere Blessed Name.' "

With his mother's talk loud in his ears, he walked down the railroad track. The next moment a new name was born in the world. He would take the name of his uncle who died in Belfast. An ironical smile came to the walking ex-convict—"Uncle don't mind—it's a good name," he thought, as he walked by the scene where Japper had been battered to the grave——

Jerry Brannigan awaited him.

"Where's Bum?" asked Jack Muldoon.

"He's out hunting, I guess. He's been out all night," laughed Jerry.

"Well, Jerry—I've got a new name."

"What is it?"

"Jarnegan—my mother's maiden name."

"A good name, Jack—it rolls like thunder in yere mouth. See that ye streak it with lightnin'."

Jerry's housekeeper had a warm meal and a bottle of bourbon on the table. She shook hands with Jarnegan as he entered the dining room. "Indade, Jack—she's yere friend—never a word will she say—for if she did—Father O'Houlihan that's gone, would haunt her."

"And now," continued the lawyer, "I'm going to advance ye fifty dollars, Jack. Go on out an' forgive if ye can—and if ye can't—forget." With heart too full for speech, Jarnegan mumbled, "Thanks," and turned away.

The wise lawyer walked to the kitchen, not wishing to see tears in the eyes of Jarnegan.

The housekeeper nodded on her chair. "To bed wit' ye, Bridget—it'll soon be time to get up," he said.

"No," she fretted, "I shall not go to bed wit' a dirty dish on my conscience." The lawyer returned to Jarnegan.

At four that morning Jarnegan boarded the train with a worn handbag Jerry had given him. It contained two quarts of whisky, a Bible and a frayed copy of Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi."

"Ye can get yourself rigged up in Chicago, Jack—and ye can write me a letter now and then."

"I'll wire you, Jerry—that'll be easier—it's hard for me to write."

"As ye will, Jack—but let me hear from ye."

The train pulled in. "You have my word,

Jerry—God bless you forever. I'll pay you if I have to dig ditches to do it."

"Don't worry about that, Jack—just git on your feet. The rest'll come."

The lawyer's eyes followed the train until it faded away. Then turning his face toward Ironton, he murmured, "I wish to God I was him."

CHAPTER IV.

JARNEGAN hardly changed his position all night. He placed the money which Jerry Brannigan gave him in his vest pocket. The five dollars which the State of Ohio had given him, he kept separate.

"Five dollars for two and a half years of labor—the dirty cheats," he thought—"I'll spend it with a whore."

The slow train chugged its way across Indiana. He sat in the cheap car, immigrants traveling westward, chattering all around him. An old Jewess, with the yellow face of a wind-tanned gypsy, offered him an apple. He took his heavy hand from his jaw and said slowly, "That's fine of you —you dear old girl—but I'd choke on an apple now!" She looked at him and waddled to her seat. Jarnegan again placed his elbow on the window sill and rested his jaw on his hand and stared out of the window. He counted the telegraph posts

mechanically. When the lights from the engine streamed over the wires he conceived the idea that they were the strings of an immense violin stretched across the world. His eyes followed them.

"I'll hear some music in Chicago, by God —some violin music." He picked the battered hand bag from the floor and opened it hastily, seizing a bottle.

"No corkscrew—oh, hell"—he walked to the old Jewess who chatted with her tribe . . . the bottle in his hand. . . .

"Can I——

She saw what he wanted and instantly dug deep in a basket and handed him a corkscrew.

He opened the bottle and offered her a drink. She shook her head, nonplussed. Jarnegan returned to his seat, his left hand clenching the bottle. The liquor purred down his throat smooth as oil. His tremendous body teemed with elemental music. The light flashed over the wires again. He held the bottle upward.

He was no longer the ex-convict—but a mastodon of destiny. "I'll make good, God-damn their hearts."

Desire for women raced after the liquor.

Daylight came slowly.

He emptied the first bottle.

"Me for Custom House Place when I hit Chicago—none of the girls will be up . . . but by God I'll wake 'em—they'll get up for a guy like me."

He picked up the Bible and turned to the Song of Solomon. Liquor clouded his eyes and made the words jumble.

He threw the book aside. "That old baby loved the girls, too. I wish this damn train 'ud hurry." He opened the other bottle.

A mantle of soft gray light had spread over the earth. Some immigrants snored across from him. He drained the last of the bottle.

The train reached Englewood and stopped for ten minutes and then reached Chicago in thirty minutes.

When the brakeman announced "Chicago —Dearborn Station—don't forget your parcels," Jarnegan kicked the empty bottles under the seat, snapped the hand bag shut, forgot the Bible and walked out of the car, defiantly drunk but master of his senses.

A crowd of people, waiting for friends and relatives, formed a half moon of curious faces as the passengers walked through the iron gates.

No one waited for Jarnegan. He carried the hand bag jauntily, the book by Mark Twain sliding up and down in the bottom of it. All unknowing, with liquor rolling in his head, and a sardonic smile on his strong face, he was the wealthiest man in Chicago that morning. He had, that which was never to leave him, an intuitive sense that amounted to genius, and a tremendous gusto for life. Men and women were to love him, in spite of themselves, all along his turbulent road.

He walked through the waiting throng

and checked the hand bag. Holding the check in his hand he went to the entrance of the depot and tore it up. "What do I want with the thing?" He went over to Salvador's saloon, thinking to himself. . . .

"That wop's still here." He pulled out one of the bills Jerry Brannigan had given him and laid it on the bar.

"Gimme some liquor—no wash. . . . I'll take her straight."

The bartender rubbed the bottle with a rag and placed it on the bar.

"Gimme an egg," commanded Jarnegan —"and a big glass."

The bartender cracked the egg. It fell to the bottom of the glass. Jarnegan poured liquor over it. He swallowed it all. "Gimme another."

The bartender obeyed and put the change on the bar.

"Know any girls?" asked Jarnegan.

"I kin telephone over to Madame Kerry's," said the bartender obligingly,

knowing he would get ten per cent on all the money Jarnegan spent in her house.

"That's fine—tell her a real guy's comin' over."

He poured another drink—"Where is it?"

"I'll give you her card," said the bartender, handing him a card on the back of which a lewd verse was printed.

"It's the third joint on Custom House Place. It's got a green lamp in the front—you can't miss it . . . jest give the girl this card an' tell 'em I sent you."

"All right," answered Jarnegan, pouring more liquor, and picking up all but a dollar of his change. The bartender rang up the amount on the register and said as Jarnegan turned away——

"Wait a minute, brother—have a drink on me."

"Christ, yes," and Jarnegan smiled.

"There's a little brunette over there," the bartender confided, "and she's a peach—her name's Winifred—ask for her—boy—she's

there—she kin love the wart off a deacon's ankle."

"Sure," replied Jarnegan, "I'll give the girl a chance, but she'll have to be there." He looked straight at the bartender, who was shining a glass. "Because," he said, with dramatic pauses, "I've been in the stir two years and a half—and it's been a long time between women."

While the bartender was thinking of something to say, Jarnegan had passed through the swinging doors.

When Jarnegan left Winifred next morning he had less than four dollars. His head throbbed from the effects of drink. He walked toward Lake Michigan, trying to decide what to do.

A "Ringling Brothers" poster struck his eye at the corner of Twelfth and Wabash Avenue. Barnum and Bailey's—combined with Ringling's . . . the Greatest Shows on Earth—had just finished playing at the Coli-

seum. He hurried down Wabash Avenue to inquire in which direction they had gone.

The negro custodian told him—"They go Cedah Rapids—Des Moines—den Omaha —dey's dere now—den deys goin' to Europe —Aziah—Aferca—nex' winteh—wish I wuz a young man."

Jarnegan's mind was made up. He would find out where the circus was—and learn which direction the Billposters' car was traveling.

He decided to go to the Labor Agencies on Canal and West Madison streets and try to ship to Omaha.

"If they're doin' any construction work along the Union Pacific or any other road out that way they'll want laborers—I'll have to get a suit case before they'll ship me . . . that'll cost me a dollar—then the Labor Agency'll want a dollar—that'll leave me a dollar or so to eat on. . . ."

He walked along Canal Street looking for signs of "Men Wanted."

All about him were the wrecks of labor.

He felt superior among them. Weak physically from prison and debauch, his ego became stronger.

On West Madison Street he found an Agency that wanted to ship him to Denver. The price was a dollar and a half. Denver was five hundred miles further than he wanted to go. He decided to take a chance on leaving the train at Omaha. "Five hundred miles for around three dollars ain't so bad," he consoled himself.

The gentleman in charge of obtaining men for the different jobs who was known as the "man hunter" looked at Jarnegan's heavy frame and shoulders.

"You'll do," he said; "where's your suit case?"

"Over at my room," replied Jarnegan.

"Bring it here an' check it an' I'll give you a ticket," the man said.

"All right," said Jarnegan, hurrying away.

He found an old leather valise on Halsted Street. A rusty key was attached to it. Mak-

ing sure that it locked, Jarnegan asked the owner the price of it. . . . "One dollar."

"Got an old pair of overalls and a loose brick around?" Jarnegan asked.

"Yes—yes—I know what you want."

The proprietor hurried to the rear of the store and returned with a brick already wrapped in a greasy pair of overalls.

"This it—this make valise heavy—thirty cents."

Jarnegan placed the brick and overalls in the valise and locked it. He then hurried toward the Labor Agency and turned it in, giving the "man hunter" a dollar and a half.

The next day at noon he swung from the train at Omaha.

The man hunter in charge yelled at him—

"Come back here—you ain't in Denver."

"Who the hell wants to go to Denver," and Jarnegan was lost in the crowd.

He went into a cheap restaurant on 16th Street and asked the way to the circus grounds.

A long car ride brought him the informa-

tion that the Billposters' car was due three days later in Colorado Springs, a short distance beyond Denver.

"Good God—why in hell didn't I take a chance and go on to Denver—but then—oh, hell—I'd been just as bad off."

The thought came to him of trying for a job with the circus. He felt the remainder of his money.

"Nope—I'll beat it out on a mail train—I may know some of the bunch with the outfit. They're a Union gang with Ringling's, and they'll feed the guy that killed Japper, by God. . . . I can hold my head up anyhow when I meet my own kind—that's worth something."

He walked off the lot rattling the eighty cents in his pocket and humming. . . .

"Hold youh pahdneh to youh breast—
God an' natcher'll do the rest—
Gee, ain't they a lot o' childehn in dis
heah taown?"

He passed a saloon on Battleax Avenue and heard singing inside. . . .

"Has anybody here seen Kelly?
Kelly with the green necktie—
His hair is red an' his eyes are pink—
He's a German—I don't think——"

"I'll go in an' get a shot—might as well be broke as the way I am. What in the hell can an Irish-American do with eighty cents?"

He walked to the bar. A crowd stood at the end of it. They were serenading the collector for a brewery—a genial red-faced German. The bartender shoved Jarnegan's money back—and winked toward the collector.

"Here's bumps, brother," said Jarnegan, holding the whisky aloft. All turned toward the ex-convict as he threw the liquor down his throat.

"Drinkin' whisky on a brewery collector," piped a little man.

"Sure—" said Jarnegan . . . "what in hell would you have me drink?" Turning to the bartender—"Gimme another one."

"It's on me, brother," said the German.

"Spoken like a man," said Jarnegan, tossing the liquor.

"Now we all drink again," suggested the collector.

The bartender had anticipated his wishes.

Jarnegan drained his glass and walked out, murmuring—"A lucky break"—and walked toward the Union Station.

"I can make the Springs by to-morrow night easy if I can just grab the Limited here," he thought.

That night Jarnegan clung to the blind of the San Francisco Limited. He reached Denver the next day, and Colorado Springs ten hours later. He was worn out and very hungry. "I hate to bum anybody for a feed. . . . I'll stick it out till I find the car—the bunch'll feed me."

CHAPTER V

HE walked about the railroad yards for nearly two hours and failed to find the car. Weak from hunger, he turned again toward the town.

The sun shone hot through mountain air clear as crystal. Far away Pike's Peak was a fragment of white against the blue sky. Sight-seeing busses rolled about the city.

Gnawed by hunger, and with blistered feet, Jarnegan observed it all.

"I gotta eat . . . by God. . . . I just gotta eat." He sank in a wicker chair in front of the Antlers Hotel.

"I'm goin' to brace the first guy that passes. . . . I don't give a good God-damn if it's a policeman—there ain't no law when you're hungry."

An old man, with long gray beard, stained tobacco-yellow, and reaching to his belt,

passed Jarnegan with a tooth pick in his mouth. He had a strong, heavy face streaked red and blue, and a knob on the end of his nose. He looked to Jarnegan like one of those old men who slip from life suddenly, the vital spark burning to the last. The ex-convict quickly noted laughter in his eyes. He left his chair.

"Mister," he said, "I'm hungrier than hell —I've beat it six hundred miles on one meal —will you stake me to a feed—I'm chasin' Ringling's Billposters' car."

"You're outta luck, my lad . . . the boys left here yesterday—are you a billposter?"

"Yeap—but oh, hell," he turned, ashamed of the hunger weakness.

"Well, come on with me, lad—we'll eat—or you will—I've already scoffed." The old man led Jarnegan into a fashionable restaurant adjoining the hotel.

"Don't look at the schedule, kid . . . order from memory—I'll pay."

Jarnegan was ill at ease. His badly fitting suit was torn at the elbows, and the cotton padding in the coat bulged at the shoulders. He had not shaved since he left the penitentiary. His hands were coal-streaked. The skin was torn from them.

Noting his discomfiture, the old man said kindly, "Never mind, brother—they'll think you're a movie actor——"

"I know—but God . . . I look like the wreck o' the Hesperus."

The waiter approached.

"Would you like a big sirloin steak—they ain't no taste to a tenderloin," said the old man.

"Sure—anything—" smiled Jarnegan, his hard mouth softening, "I won't quarrel." The old man ordered the meal.

Jarnegan's eyes went wet. He put his heavy arms on the table and said, "I thank you, Mister."

"Don't call be *Mister*—they hain't no one

called me that since I was in China—and that was so long ago I can't remember." A pause. . . . "Anyhow—just call me Jonathon—Brother Jonathon . . . the Giver of Life."

"All right—then—China, huh—" Jarnegan laughed. . . . "Does old Shanghai smell like she always did—I'll never forget that place . . . you can smell it around the bend in Japan—like eighty dagoes eating garlic on a windy night. . . ."

The old man was pleased. "You been around some—eh, lad—how old are you?"

"Nearly thirty—Jonathon—I've rambled some—went across with Barnum's—I just bumped into some tough luck and I wanta get on my feet again."

The old man . . . long a roustabout over the world, and known in its wayside places as Brother Jonathon—the Giver of Life—being the last and the shrewdest of a wandering band of medicine fakers, now looked keenly at Jarnegan.

"Well, I ain't askin' questions," he said—"and don't you tell none—I've glued a lot of pages together in my life, too, brother—an' if anybody ever pulls 'em apart they can't read the ink on either of them."

Their eyes met. They understood. The old man saw Jarnegan's strong face go soft and watched him hold his lips together to keep them from trembling."

"Pardon—Brother—they've punished you—haven't they?" He held up his hand. "No answer—I know—you see, kid—I call you kid—I've got it on you nearly fifty years—and I've had more bumps than a hobo can get on the Denver and Rio Grande." There was a silence of several moments. The old man stroked his long yellow and white beard.

"Do you believe in a hereafter, kid?"

Jarnegan looked at him.

"I don't know—I'd like to. . . . I told the Catholic Church to go to hell when I was a kid—but somehow I like them—they put

on a damn good show—and I'm nuts on drama."

"Well—it doesn't matter, lad—I guess—you'll go to the hereafter whether you believe it or not—but the smart boob is the boob who believes—now I began with theosophy—I'm away beyond that now—got my own system—I believe that souls are all sorted out and that the Great Sorter gives 'em to people who can take care of 'em best—loans 'em out like—I think he's got billions of 'em—an' he knows where they are every minute—that's His job—I don't think He gives a good God-damn what you suffer—what I suffer—so long as He kin give one of His souls another shade of green or red or a cross between purple an' blue—to some he sends the soul of a butterfly—to others—the soul of a lion . . . others—a jackass—then he sits back in his big chair and listens to the jackass bray at the lion—and hears the butterfly screaming at the eagle. . . . He's got to do that—he'd go nuts if He didn't. . . ."

"That's a great system," Jarnegan put in.

Brother Jonathon shrugged his shoulders. "Well—I get a lotta fun out of it—it helps me know people—now I got you figured out—now I'd like to have you work with me—I work alone a great deal—but I'm getting old—we'd get along great . . . we don't jolt each other—I know." The old man put his bony hands out and worked them frantically, spreading them apart as a large bird does its claws. . . . "I feel your aura . . . I can see it—it's got red in it and violet mixed with yellow—it tells me everything—YOU—my boy—never mind how I know—I do—I was never born of woman—they first heard of me as a young man in China—and then I came hither—I have clouds in my pockets—and the moon in my hair—I pull young maidens from under stars and wed them to condors—in this manner I have developed a bird-woman more beautiful than the soul of Jesus whom I know quite well. But that

doesn't matter now . . . you have been sent to me—in those early days in China it was definitely assured that I was to be the vehicle that would carry you over a torrent that would otherwise dash you to pieces . . . you sitting in that chair in front of the Antlers', me walking past you—that was not accidental—it was known in the mountains of the moon a million years before Christ was born. Nothing is accidental—the man who murders another man does it on an order from above—men are born to be murdered. . . .

Jarnegan looked, the muscles of his face taut.

Brother Jonathon went on. . . . "No man is a murderer—no girl is a virgin—no man is great—none small—now I want you to work with me—you're a day late on the Billposters—neither was that accidental—did you know any of the boys?"

"Perhaps——"

"Well—I have pleasant work for you—I need a shillaber—you understand."

"Yes—what's the line?" asked Jarnegan.

"I heal the sick—I bring balm to the wounded in the battle of life—I anoint the dying—I am the last living prophet in the Old Testament—Brother Jonathon—the Giver of Life—you would pass the bottles out to the poor people who can afford to buy them—I have—of course—a different system—I charge two dollars a bottle—my collector takes the other dollar—palming it—you understand," Jarnegan nodded—"I furnish the silver—let me see your hand." Jarnegan held his hand across the table—we'll rub them well with oil and make them flexible . . . would you like to try it—I go—with my healing gift and my team and wagon to California this summer."

"Sure—I'd like to work with you—I'm on."

The men rose. Brother Jonathon said—"I work this evening . . . and you can help me get ready."

That night at eight o'clock the old man stood at a busy street corner and preached salvation.

Jarnegan listened to the thunder of his words with a sardonic smile. He thought of the chaplain at the penitentiary, a little man with a broken nose, which seemed to filter his speech and make it squeak. As Brother Jonathon talked the ex-convict opened and shut his fists alternating by rubbing a thumb in the palm of his hand. He needed a new suit badly—would the citizens of Colorado Springs help him buy them? He hoped so. His mind raced as Brother Jonathon talked with gusto:

"Ladies and Brothers—I come not among you to spread sedition but to lay over the wounds of life the divine affluence of our Blessed Savior who died to make men free. For inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of them so do you also unto me. . . . Christ healed by the laying on of hands. In those far-off and gorgeous days there was not the

internal disease which we modern healers are called upon to combat—but be that as it may . . . our Savior was a great healer and walked among you as I now walk among you —with healing and benediction—for you people were alive when Christ was—we all were—our souls were always here—always have been. . . .

"When a young man like Elisha of old I heard a voice from heaven. . . . I had studied medicine in the Acropolis and was the leading student when I heard the voice—in the far country of China you will find an herb that will be sufficient for the needs of mankind if you are hardy enough to go and find it. You are the young physician—the young healer—you carry the balm of Gilead in your head. . . .

"—So I went thither and found this precious herb upon which I have worked these many years. It is now the world's greatest cure-all—it is compounded of the herbs of rare and healing flowers that grow along

the banks of the Yellow River in faraway China—that river that washes the fertile valleys as with brooks of quicksilver and takes up the healing moistures and minerals from the earth and pulls them from the sky to grow again in these herbs and flowers . . . this medicine will stop a toothache in the flash of an eye—it will relieve the tired mother of the ache in her heart and back . . . it will make children a godsend—and their voices to sound like the voices of angels —far off—far—far—far—very, very far off."

Brother Jonathon was electric energy. The tails of his long black coat flapped around him. His arms circled and went up and down. The long beard spread out. The crowd gathered and became more attentive. He sensed his control and his manner became more ingratiating.

Jarnegan, the born observer, watched closely. As the old man's mood changed and his aged but firm hands spread out like the

claws of an eagle, he became even more confidential.

"How many bottles have we with us, Assistant Healer?" The old man looked at Jarnegan.

"Not many—Great Master—there was such a demand for them in Denver—but——"

The old man took the words——

"But you shall not be disappointed so long as it is within my power not to disappoint you—the bottles, ladies and brothers, are priced at one dollar now—you will notice the price is marked two dollars on the wrapper—that is the usual price—often when my supply from China is low I have been offered many, many dollars for a bottle when I had it not—my assistant will pass among you and if you wish to ask further questions about this remedy of the ancients I am with you—for I am not as one who sells medicine but am a healer of the people—I am the prophet—the

Giver of Life—I passed through your fair city when yonder mountains were just discovered——"

Jarnegan passed among the crowd with the basket of bottles, laying down the basket each time he made change. . . .

The old man talked constantly.

Each time a five-dollar bill was to be changed Jarnegan would count out four dollars in silver before the patron while the attention of the audience was upon the speaker. The customer, seeing the money counted, held out his hand for it. The silver coins would rattle downward and the customer would place them in his pocket—uncounted again. A dollar would remain "cupped," held as if by suction in the palm of Jarnegan's hand. He would do the same with a quarter or fifty-cent piece.

Jarnegan, through practice with the old man, became proficient in the art and often had fifteen or twenty dollars at the end of the day's work.

The work was not heavy. Brother Jonathon mixed his concoction alone. It was his life—and the old man had faith in it, or at least, he was so superb an actor that Jarnegan did not doubt his faith. He sent his money daily to a bank in Salt Lake City and carried but an ordinary amount with him. He would often bottle enough of the concoction to last several days. Time did not bother him. He was never bored. He would feed his team along the roadway or at the edge of a town and remain near them for hours.

Whether or not he was part gypsy Jarnegan never knew. He had seven different editions of the Bible and believed that the world would end by deluge. He would often look up at the stars with the hope of finding one of them become as large as the sun to the naked eye—the deluge was near when the star was seen.

Jonathon and Jarnegan were never more than well-agreed acquaintances. Jarnegan was self-supporting, and the old man felt that

his medicine was worth whatever any one could be induced to give for it. This allowed Jarnegan hours alone. He drank, gambled, spent money with women whenever possible. He became drunk five days in Provo, Utah. The old man took care of him during the sobering process.

They came across a motion picture company in another Utah town. Jarnegan became fascinated. It was one of the early western pictures. The story was written by a woman, the cowboys were all straight-legged and six feet of good-looking manhood. The villain was shot to death in the end.

Jarnegan began to think about pictures. He conceived ideas for the most fantastic melodrama. He saw battles where men rode in the clouds and heard women sobbing in lonely rooms. He saw the jaws of pugilists clattering under the impact of blows. He saw them sway on the ropes.

They were all the imaginative longings of his childhood which the rough years had lulled.

Finally, after a night's debauch in a Chinese bawdy house on Second Street in Sacramento he boarded a train for Los Angeles.

He did not say farewell to Jonathon, the Giver of Life.

CHAPTER VI

JARNEGAN secured a cheap room over a pawnshop on Los Angeles Street. Each day he made the rounds of the studios, learning bits of gossip and talking to any one possible concerning films and their makers.

When night came he haunted the cheaper picture houses on Main Street and observed that they generally ran pictures which were several years old. He wondered why. For the first time in his life he gave thought—or wonder—to the possible marketing of films. He began to read motion picture magazines. Though caring little for a higher grade of literature, the cheapness of these magazines nauseated him. Still he read and remembered.

He was encouraged to read that nearly every one had started in pictures penniless—this western cowboy, Tom Mix, was said to have been a bartender, and by some he was

claimed to be a Slav from a coal-mining district in Pennsylvania. . . . William S. Hart had been a Shakespearean actor—Jarnegan wondered how he became a western player. David W. Griffith had been a strolling actor. Each career intrigued him.

During his third day at the Pioneer Studios he met a young man his own age who had arrived just three weeks before with a circus. In conversation they traveled the roads of the world together. After a long talk the ex-convict said: "My name's Jack Jarnegan, brother—and yours?"

"Jimmy Falon"—was the answer—"glad to know you. You're the only one I've met around here so far that ain't a hick."

"Same to you, 'bo—where you livin'?" asked Jarnegan.

"Down on Cahuenga near Sunset in Hollywood—pretty good joint."

"That so," said Jarnegan—with raised voice—"I'm away down on Los Angeles Street—a hell of a district."

"Why don't you come out where I am—I'll tell the landlord you're an old pal o' mine. He's an old floater himself—used to do a trapeze act—broke his arm an' shoulder," said Jimmy Falon.

"Fix it up for me a week from Saturday—I got my rent paid that far and I'd better stick where I am. I'm none too flush anyhow."

"All right—I'll fix it for you . . . the guy's takin' quite a shine to me—he will to you, too, if you talk circus to him. You know how lonesome an old rambler gets when he quits the road."

"I'll say I do," returned Jarnegan. "What's the 'in' on this game, anyhow?"

"Well, always tell 'em you've had experience. You just come off the 'legitimate'—you know the line. Every ham out here says he played with Mansfield and Garrick and every one else on the legitimate stage. I've had a week's work and I'm gettin' next to the racket. A guy on the lot here's gettin' four

hundred a week now. He walks by here a hobo with his bundle on his back a year ago—beatin' it up to Ventura County to harvest beans. He says to his buddy: 'Damned if I'm not tired of this bummin'—I'm goin' back and hang around Pioneer till they gimme a job.' Well, he done it . . . and now look at him."

"Good Lord," returned Jarnegan, amazed.

Falon wrote the address of his hotel with lead pencil and Jarnegan put it in his coat pocket. He did not see the young circus rover again until he went to live at his hotel some weeks later.

For two weeks he went to different studios and then read an advertisement in the evening papers:

> Laborers Wanted—$2.00 per day—ten hours. Metropolis Studio, Marigold Avenue, Hollywood.

Jarnegan was at the studio before seven the next morning. He was picked with three others by the foreman of a construction gang, just beginning to excavate for a building.

He was a faithful and tireless worker with pick and shovel.

Still in sympathy with Union Labor he made a speech to the assembled laborers during the noon hour. It was half in jest that he stood on a nail keg and addressed them in the manner of Brother Jonathan——

"Fellow dirt slingers—you've got nothing to lose but your pick and shovel—let's all strike." He went on and on, working himself and the men into a laughing frenzy.

A director stood near a telegraph post, a smile on his face. When Jarnegan had finished, the director asked:

"Did you ever act?"

"Some—I was on the legitimate—played all through the west this year. Landed here—soaked all my stuff—broke flatter'n a waiter's feet an' here I am."

"Would you like a chance acting?" the director asked.

"God, yes—it ain't fun to swing that damn

pick—I'd do anything to get away from that——"

"Well, I'm startin' a picture an' I think you can play a part in it—you look it, anyhow, and that's all you need—do you know anything about Danton?"

"Not a damn thing—who was he?"

"Well, you remind me of him, brother—he was a big, brawny, black-headed bird in the French Revolution—that's the kind of a yarn I'm doing—you don't have to do much—you're only in three or four scenes—you just come on and off and make a speech—natural like—like you did just now—I'll see that you get ten bucks a day—that'll beat movin' the earth . . . come along with me."

The director led Jarnegan to the casting office: "Here's a down-an'-out actor, Meldrum," he said to the casting director. "Don't he look like our man for Danton?"

The casting director sized Jarnegan up. . . . "Yes—he does." The two men stepped aside. . . . "This fellow's a laborer

out here—you can get him for ten bucks a day—he'll do just as well as Roberts and he wants fifty bucks a day, as you know."

"Sure—I know," replied the director.

"It'll help me out, too," said the director—"I wanta keep my cost sheet down on this picture—went seven thousand over on the other one . . . old Isaacs raised hell."

"I'll put him on," said the casting director, walking back to Jarnegan, who stood, tan shirt wide open, disclosing a sun-burned breast.

"Tell the construction boss you're startin' with me—if you want—this job'll last a coupla weeks at ten bucks a day—that's a big jump from swingin' a pick. . . ."

"All right—" said Jarnegan happily, "when'll I start."

"Report to-morrow morning," was the answer. . . .

The director added . . . "Be here at eight."

"All right," was Jarnegan's answer.

Jarnegan was awake next morning long before the sun came up. He was a changed man. Not in years had he been so happy. He dressed as carefully as possible and was on the street before six o'clock. He walked restlessly about until time to take the Hollywood car. All the way to the film city he dreamed dreams. "Gee—if I can only get to makin' a hundred a week steady and can live in a climate like this—that 'ud be too good to be true."

He was not called upon to do anything the first day.

With eager eyes he observed everything around him. He watched the camera turn with the wonder of a child. He saw the assistant director place a small blackboard in front of the camera each time the director yelled "Cut." The cameras would stop turning. On the small board was written the director's name. If that turn of the camera had not been satisfactory the director would call NG and these initials were writ-

ten on the board. This part of the film was not developed.

As in the prison, Jarnegan absorbed everything like a sponge. He watched whenever possible, oblivious of all around him.

When it came time for him to make his appearance before the camera he walked on the set nonchalantly. It was a small scene. The strong overhead lights blinded him momentarily as he faced the camera. His eyes soon grew accustomed to them.

He made another appearance the next day.

On the third day he addressed an audience on a Paris street. He loafed about the set for a week before called upon to appear before the camera again. Luckily for Jarnegan it was in the happy days when efficiency experts were unknown about studios. It gave him a chance to learn a great deal and earn, what was to him at that time, a fine salary.

Before he was finished the job had lasted nearly four weeks. At the end of this time Jarnegan moved to the hotel on Cahuenga

where Jimmy Falon lived. Soon they roomed together on Hollywood Boulevard.

Pictures were the absorbing ambition of their lives. Affluence brought boredom to Jarnegan later. But now, all the intensity of his thwarted and dramatic life was thrown into his passion for success. He wanted to be a director.

There was that element of freedom, of vagabondage with pay, and complete lack of prudery regarding the elementals of life which went straight to the heart of Jarnegan. There was always, when his spirits were low, a new tale of another astonishing success. The abilities of men were judged hastily and dismissed as quickly. If a man played a bad part or directed a picture worse than the others, his future was ruined according to the drifters in Hollywood. According to those who were down and out, no man had ability, and no director or player in a high place ever praised another in like place. Flabby-faced and expressionless girls

were made stars overnight. Somewhere in the background, always, was a man of influence.

No rush for economic power in the world had ever equaled the rush to Hollywood at the time of Jarnegan's arrival. For those who rushed thither were beaten in nearly every other walk of life, the failures on the stage, ruffians of the masculine gender and tawdry women, the mental level of servant girls, were the dominant people.

The man whose wife had deserted him in prison now learned more about women. His associates, Falon among them, were always seen with beautiful inarticulate young women.

"How the devil do you pick 'em up, Jimmy?" Jarnegan asked him.

They were "on location" in the desert, doing a "western" together. It was a time for talk, and confidences.

"It's this way, Jack . . . you can get any broad in the world if they think you'll put

'em over in pictures. They all think I'll be the next director at Pioneer—an' I get 'em while the gettin's good. Once you land 'em they can't squeal. Why, I know a young broad who came out from the Y. W. C. A. 'cause she'd heard a lot of rumors about young broads goin' astray. She consulted with Jack Whiffle about it . . . he was doin' 'Barriers Burned Away' at the time . . , I think—anyhow . . . all I know—this dame did a part in his next picture and used to stick around with him quite a bit—Jesus, she was purty, too—about twenty-eight, I guess—that's a bad age for dames around pictures if they're pure."

Jarnegan was thinking during Jimmy's recital—not of women—but of his future.

"I gotta chance to be Whiffle's assistant on one picture—he told me I could play the heavy and assist him, too."

"Which company?" asked Jimmy.

"Some little independent company, I guess."

"I'd take it, Jack—then you can sell yourself to the big ones—that's the way it's worked."

Jarnegan had assisted Whiffle and played the villain besides. He had often worked twenty hours a day. In the early days an assistant director was a blending of everything.

Jarnegan kept the company assembled, he looked after the property, he conferred with the camera men, he carried the script of the story about with him and said "yes" to the director at the proper time.

It was in that happy day when all pictures were made alike. When emotion and beauty were accidental, when men were valued according to their knowledge of "gags"—if a man fell down and hurt his knee . . . that was a gag—if a player dodged a custard pie and it hit another actor . . . that was also a gag . . . by this method, such men as Sennett, Arbuckle, Chaplin and their ilk were developed.

They were all men like Jarnegan, illiterate

and vain. The ex-convict was their superior in this—his soul was large enough for chaos. He unconsciously sensed futility.

A year passed and Jarnegan had been an assistant on one picture, had played in six others, and was during this period nearly always broke.

The hotel proprietor with the broken shoulder was his friend. Jarnegan managed to pay his rent somehow, though often he was weeks in arrears. His first year in Hollywood, when not working, was spent between the studios and the pawnshops.

Women played a part in his life at this time, and one, who later became famous and died a suicide, fell in love with him.

They were doing a Civil War picture. Jarnegan was one of the handsome automatons on the staff of Robert E. Lee. Alice Toren played the heroine.

The camp was pitched under the live oaks at Griffith Park. There were a few chance words—and Alice wondered. Jarnegan was

to rescue her that afternoon from the advancing Federals . . . she was carrying valuable state papers from God knows to God knows where. At the end of the wild ride —Alice was to impulsively kiss him—her unknown rescuer . . . and Jarnegan was to be dumbfounded by this mark of affection from one of the most famous belles of the South.

Alice, then a girl of seventeen, and one of the most beautiful women who ever came into pictures, liked Jarnegan at once. The other members of the company treated her with too much civility—she was the director's pet. Jarnegan, with the reticence born of long silences, was courteous to Alice . . . that was all.

"Have you been in pictures long," she asked him.

"About a year," he answered.

"Do you like 'em?"

"I love 'em," was Jarnegan's answer. "It's not like work."

"Oh, I do, too," she clapped her hands together . . . and then, "Where are you from, back east?"

"Ohio."

"Gee—is that so—I'm from Pennsylvania—your neighbor."

"I won't gossip," smiled Jarnegan.

"You'd better not—I'll tell on you if you do."

Her words momentarily jolted Jarnegan.

After the rescue that afternoon the kiss was overlong and with full lips. She clung to Jarnegan with emotion not written into the story. Now Jarnegan wondered.

"Everybody's girl—any man's who's not bad lookin' and strong—the fellow in the room at the proper time—" Perhaps no man in pictures even at that time, understood women as well as Jarnegan. He had been trained in red light districts.

As the rest of the company rushed up, headed by the director, Jarnegan said quickly—"Can I see you."

"Yes," she answered as quickly, "call the Alexandria."

Jarnegan began to get along.

The next night Jarnegan took the long ride from Hollywood to the Alexandria Hotel in the heart of Los Angeles.

Alice met him at the door of her suite. She was alone. Jarnegan's heart beat fast. She was in negligée. Her hair fell and lay in heavy yellow clusters on her shoulders. Bottles of liquor were on her dressing table, the bureau, everywhere.

She picked up the telephone . . . "I'm not in—to any one," she said.

And then petulantly—"Damn—I wish to hell—oh, I don't know what in the hell do I wish—do you know?"

Jarnegan knew—at least for the mood of the moment. Guided by his unerring intuition with women——

"Come here, Alice," he said.

She walked toward him. He held her close.

"Don't take pictures too hard, kid—they'll get you if you do—you're too sweet a girl to go to hell."

"I know—I know—but oh, Jesus—" she clung to him—"what in the hell can I do—I can't stop—and I'll croak if I go on—I was lit again last night—and that damn Whiffle then till morning—I'm disgusted."

"Never mind, little girl," Jarnegan held her close, his mind far from pity or morals as her arms went round him—"it doesn't make any difference."

"Maybe not to you," she said; "you're a man—but I'll crack in two like one of them China dolls with the silly grin on their faces."

Perhaps Jarnegan had real pity. But desire and ambition, combined with his knowledge of the more wretched aspects of womanhood, always blinded him. His creed with women, unchanging through the years, was, "If I don't—some one else will."

Alice helped Jarnegan a great deal. He

helped her in another way. When worn out with dissipations and beaten by the storms, he was the only oak under which she could find real shelter.

He was the only man in Hollywood who did not ask questions. She talked to him of other men as though he were an understanding brother. How was she to know that the hard years had pounded indifference and shrewd intuition into Jarnegan. Neither could she know that Jarnegan had contempt for women—that his ego was so enormous he thought of nothing in connection with it. Jarnegan instinctively knew her type—that the minute he found fault he would lose his hold. He knew he was her anchor. She thought it was nobility of character in him.

Alice discussed the frailties of the leading men in the film industry with Jarnegan. It was an old trick he had learned as a lad in Ironton. The women below the railroad tracks had discussed with him failings of leading business men who visted them in the

darkness. Life was merely repeating itself.

Men disclose their weakness to women in intimate hours. Jarnegan pumped women about other men with whom he had to deal.

Alice had a flare for something. Jarnegan could never quite make out what it was. Everybody loved her. "She's everybody's dog," Jarnegan often thought—"but how damned lovely." Often the brutal ex-convict with the streak of tenderness wondered and wondered. "The loveliest women are the weakest—flowers that can't stand the rain and the storm." In his own way he evolved a philosophy. If he plucked a flower, he at least would not judge it, save that it was beautiful.

Jarnegan told Alice something of his early days. He clothed them with mystery by inference. Alice told her heartbreaks—her work in a dry goods store in Pittsburgh when only twelve years of age—the long ride from Braddock—eight miles away—remaining on the job until she was fifteen—

marrying a pool room loafer with slick hair.

"I didn't know what it was all about. Mother said he'd make me a good husband. Anyhow—it was somethin' happening." She had poured ginger ale into bourbon. "Well, I went through hell with that guy—walked up and down Smithfield Street lookin' for customers—you can believe it or not—found a rich Jew by accident—course he didn't know I was on the make—so I strung him along—maybe you think I didn't have to figure things fast—well, I landed in the Follies and here I am—and where in the hell do I go from here . . . anyhow, I'm divorced from that slick-headed yap."

"I think that's a mistake, Alice—you should stay married—then no one else can marry you—it's like walkin' out of one cell into another when you get divorced. That's the way I'm working it—they hooked me once—never again."

"Lordy—that is a good system . . . it oughta go great in Hollywood."

It was through the influence of Alice that Jarnegan was made Edward Bernard's assistant director. But it was only through Jarnegan's tremendous capacity for work that he endured. It was Jarnegan's greater sense of drama and elemental knowledge of life that made Bernard a talked-about director among the producers.

Bernard was a director with no imagination and no sympathetic observation of life. Like most directors at the time, and even now, he thought in terms of action and not of truth. Jarnegan knew, for life had taught him, that one could lose everything, and make no gesture at all. It may be said for Bernard, though he carried the mentality of a barber through life, a calling he followed in youth, that he held the stirrup for the first great realist of the screen.

Old Isaacs, bent over, used to wander about on the different sets and watch his directors work. Isaacs had long been the laugh-

ing stock of over-educated people. But the wise and tremendous old Jew had something which the superficial people could never attain—an intuitive elemental knowledge, and a heart, that with Jarnegan's, beat in unison with the heart of mankind.

The first picture in which Jarnegan worked as assistant to Bernard was a domestic comedy drama of the west. Bernard had gone to the hills to direct an Indian raid—so necessary for such a picture—and old Isaacs had ordered Jarnegan to take a few interior scenes.

Jimmy Falon was playing in a picture with Francis X. Bushman on the Pioneer lot at the time. He lunched with Jarnegan in the studio restaurant, along the walls of which many tables were reserved for stars and directors.

"We'll be over there in a year—eh, Jack?" he said, as they seated themselves at a coffee-stained table with an extra player dressed as a gypsy fortune-teller.

"Sure thing, Jimmy—they can't stop me now—I got some scenes to direct on my own . . . Billings comes home to the house and finds his wife gone—old Isaacs ordered it—and I'm all ready to shoot."

"That's great—Gawd—I'm glad—don't forget me, Jack, if you make the hurdle."

"You got my word, Jimmy—but don't say 'if' to me, kid—they can't stop me, I tell you—I watched old Isaacs watchin' me the other day—I read faces—not books—an' I saw that old Jewish mask—smilin' back of the leather outside of his mug—he ain't foolin' me—" The gypsy fortune-teller rose—"Jimmy—" Jarnegan leaned over the table—"watch this afternoon—there won't be a word said—but just watch."

Jimmy had heard many men talk in the manner of Jarnegan. Ego was as common as water in Hollywood. But he did not know that Jarnegan blended ego with power.

"Isaacs often has assistants direct inte-

riors," volunteered Jimmy with the hope of curbing Jarnegan; "they say the old devil just naturally likes to watch pictures bein' taken—like a kid."

"Well, all right, by God—he can watch—I'm on my way." Jarnegan's tone lowered. . . . "Between you and me, Jimmy—Bernard ain't got a damn thing—he's an order boy—that's all he is—I put two suggestions over to him yesterday—but he's like all of them . . . he ain't got it inside him—and he's too damn egotistic to admit it—but you can't bluff forever in this game—no more than any other—you gotta put your cards on the table some time . . . everybody bawls the Jews out—but no other race knows real drama like they do—unless it's a few of the Irish with brains—I know they're fakers—and money hounds—so am I—that's why I've worked my damn fool head off, Jimmy—that's why the gray hairs are comin' "—he touched his head—"Christ, look at me, Jimmy—I'm not old—Christ died at my age

—things hurt me inside and by God I'm goin' to tell 'em on the screen."

Jimmy was nonplused, as all inferior natures are, in the presence of larger souls. He was shrewd and Jarnegan's overpowering confidence fascinated him. Besides, Jimmy had seen many numbskulls elevated to high power in Hollywood. Jarnegan had once seriously insisted that intelligence was a handicap in the film industry.

"What's the scene this afternoon, Jack?" he asked.

"Well, Billings' wife's unfaithful and she ducks with the English remittance man—don't even leave a decent note—just says—'I'm gone forever with Willis—don't look for me.' Billings he comes in—and sees it all."

The clock pointed to one-thirty——

"I've got to go, Jimmy—how's things on your set?"

"Everything's jake," replied Jimmy—"Francis Bushman has a new powder puff—all the girls are happy."

Rising, both men laughed.

That afternoon in a little shack at the far edge of the Pioneer lot Jarnegan assembled his small group, a camera man, a third assistant, a young property man and an old violinist. No one else was near, save Billings, who listened to Jarnegan attentively.

Jarnegan had his coat off, the sleeves of his thin white flannel shirt were rolled up, disclosing heavy arms covered with black hair. He looked about the room, his eyes taking in every object.

The set was made of three walls a dozen feet high . . . some old pictures were on the walls—a crooked scroll with the words, GOD BLESS OUR HOME, was the most prominent——

Isaacs and three other men strolled by—went on . . . then returned. Jarnegan felt pleased—he did not look their way. Isaacs felt that he had not been observed, not knowing that Jarnegan was also an actor-born.

"Now listen, Ed—" Jarnegan said to the

photographer . . . "get that picture—plain —I know what I want here—and never mind if I'm different—and you—Billings—I want you to forget you ever played in 'Way Down East' or any other hocus-pocus play—forget all you know about acting—I want you to live this part—I want *you* to be the *guy* whose wife has ducked—I don't want you to act it—I want you to suck the agony into your heart—then when it dawns on you—spill it out like blood on the floor here—you get me!"

Isaacs heard the words—his heart beat fast. He stepped a few feet closer.

"Now you come in, Billings—you look around . . . you read the note—you don't over-act—now what would you do—we all do different—it's according to what's inside —now in the yarn—you've had hell pounded outta you already—you ain't a schoolboy any more . . . you love this woman—but it's a satisfied thing—so it'll hit you harder five years from now than it does—right now

. . . but I want that effect—the effect of a man seeing the shell of a home five years away—you're not going to raise hell—you look around after you read the note—little puckers of agony crawl around your mouth—you throw your shoulders back as though a blow were whizzing by your jaw like a train of cars—then your shoulders sag—the blow's missed you, but hit you just the same—you get my meaning—for if you don't—by God we'll stay here till you do—but don't act—just be Billings—a middle-aged guy who loved a little broad who kept your bed clean and who petted you in the night. . . ."

Jarnegan stepped back. He felt the presence of Isaacs just as in the old days he had felt the presence of a guard in the penitentiary.

"Now everybody watch me—you turn the camera, Ed—stop your film—now Billings—I'll go through it first . . . play something soft," to the violinist. . . .

Jarnegan entered the room . . . and

went through the scene. Isaacs watched with wet eyes. His millions were forgotten. He was once again a lonely Jewish boy with hunger in the home. . . . Hearts sobbed with the violin. Jarnegan timed every movement with true instinct. When the quiet force of the desertion had sunk in he walked slowly to the wooden bench in the corner, on which stook a bucket of water. He took the dipper from the hook and drank mechanically. He then dipped his fingers in the dipper and rubbed his temples, and seated himself under the picture of God Bless Our Home. . . .

Billings went through the scene three times before he got it. "You slopped over here," Jarnegan explained. "You give out a false note here." But at last Jarnegan yelled—O. K. Fine—cut——"

He saw Isaacs walking away with the other men. The greatest producer in the world had his head down. "I've hit him, by God—we talk the same language but the old devil won't let on."

When "The Man Who Lived Again" was released reports from exhibitors over the country were unanimous in saying . . . "A new note in Bernard's work—audience loved it. The picture is bound to pull them in everywhere."

Jarnegan read the Hollywood Bible, the *Exhibitors' Herald*, to Falon one evening. . . .

"It was me that put the new note in, Jimmy—but look how that damn Bernard acts—he thinks it's him doin' it—but they're all alike—he'd like to fire me—but I think he's afraid of old Isaacs—I tell you, Jimmy—you can hit people with simple emotion and humor—I know it—I'll stick along awhile yet and go to old Isaacs myself—Bernard has promised he'd go to old Isaacs for me—but he keeps stallin'—I went to Nathan Leedman—Alice Toren boosted me with him . . . but I think Bernard put in a knock—they're always together—but I'll sell old Isaacs yet."

Bernard was in the position of a man who needed the advice each day of an enemy. He alternated between ego and fear. . . . "Lord, I can do what he does—just simple—that's all." He kept trying Jarnegan's methods. But he made the mistake of all second-class people in the art of emotions. He could do Jarnegan's situations mechanically. He could not feel them.

His work resembled Jarnegan's in the projection room in all outward aspects.

Isaacs often looked at the "rushes" of the film taken the day before, long after Bernard and Jarnegan had gone home. He could easily pick the few things which he had maneuvered to have Jarnegan direct. Several times he had them discarded, or hidden, under one pretense or another, and Bernard directed them over. When Jarnegan heard of these things he went to Isaacs——

"What's wrong with those scenes, Mr. Isaacs?"

And the shrewd old man replied . . . "Listen . . . Jack, my boy—my—I have fait'—nuttin', nuttin' is wrong—you bide your time." Jarnegan would return to work.

In the final cutting of the picture Jarnegan's discarded scenes were put in. In this way the old man humbled the pride of a future great director and pleased the ego of one destined to remain a hack the rest of his days.

When Jarnegan saw the second film at a Los Angeles opening he said to Jimmy Falon . . . "I know damn well my stuff is used . . . I'm not blind . . . Bernard knows it, too."

Had any other producer offered Jarnegan a job as director old Isaacs would have retained him. The old man felt he could see further than his competitors. He could.

He was cautious. He believed in making men come to him. They could be hired cheaper that way.

He established a friendly basis with Jarnegan. The latter, playing his own politics, did not forget to work. It was an outlet, and the

only one, for the consuming energy within him.

Bernard had promised Jarnegan he would use his influence. He did not. Jarnegan went to another producer and asked for a chance. Leedman would not give it to him. Alice talked to the fatherly old Isaacs and got her point over carefully. Every one in Hollywood was discussed at the dinner . . . then Alice said . . .

"You know, *Papa*—one man who'll go a long ways—" the old man looked up—Alice paused a second longer—"Jack Jarnegan—Bernard's assistant."

The old man said—"Ya—ah."

That was all.

Alice drifted in and out of Jarnegan's life as passing strangers will. They met in New York, in Florida, wherever pictures were made. They were always friends.

Perhaps Alice loved Jarnegan. There are many who still claim she did. She would at least break every date to spend hours alone

with him. She took pride in him. She saw the months make him more masterful and stern. She saw the improved manner with which he wore clothes. She often went with him to Alexander and Oviatt's and selected neckwear for him. He had that reliance on the taste of women which men from the underworld have.

She would select material for suits and talk to the tailor. And, to be truthful, she often paid for them. Jarnegan's salary at this time was one hundred dollars a week.

During the week old Isaacs chose Jarnegan to direct a picture, the news came from Vienna that Alice had killed herself in a fashionable hotel. Jarnegan had a cablegram two days before . . . it was long and rambling and ended with . . .

Be good, Big Boy—and let who will be clever—do noble things . . . not dream them all day long . . . and so make life . . . death . . . and that vast forever—one grand old song—the girl you rescued in

that awful war—them were the days, Jack—hope your pictures knocks them for a row of dead alley cats—see you in a month. . . . Here's bumps. . . . Alice. . . .

Alice's death was the talk of Hollywood. There was this to be said in its citizens' favor: If they did not understand, they at least had pity. It has never been rare in Hollywood.

The announcement of Jarnegan's promotion did not receive a paragraph in the newspapers.

Old Isaacs rubbed his hands together. The fire of Jarnegan's talk in selling himself still burned him. The old fox had drawn out the fire. He was as illiterate as a film critic. But he had amassed twenty millions by knowing men.

Jarnegan chose Jimmy Falon as his assistant director. As Jarnegan ate dinner at Armstrong and Carleton's with Falon that night he said: "It was too bad about Alice Toren, wasn't it?"

"Yes—too damn bad," returned Falon.

CHAPTER VII

JARNEGAN was directing a great ballroom scene. The splendor of the set was dazzling. Giant clusters of lights sparkled everywhere. Far above a meteor of lights poured a shimmering glare downward. So powerful were they that sunlight seemed weak by comparison. A whistle shrilled. An electrician threw a switch. The lights went out.

The whistle shrilled again. A voice boomed through a megaphone—"Try it again . . . lights up." Torrents of light were turned on.

"They may fuss this way for an hour," June, a little freckle-faced extra girl, said to Dale Malone. "It's got to be slick as the cat's whiskers before Jarnegan comes on."

Jimmy Falon, the assistant director's face was stern. His eyes were bloodshot. He

snapped directions. He acted the part of that which he was, the highest salaried assistant director in the industry. Producers were eagerly watching Falon, as Jarnegan was known as a director who had never made a financial failure. His work was imitated by other directors. But Jarnegan blended the alchemy of emotion and pathos, of laughter, tears, abandon and loneliness in his work. If a director can acquire genius, which is a mooted question, Jarnegan was that man. If not, he was a genius in his capacity for life, his Rabelaisian gusto and his intuition, which was as unerring as sidereal time.

Added power had accentuated his strong outlines. The seedy lieutenant had become the dominating general. The soldier of fortune now headed an army. He had learned swiftly and well.

In a game at which most of the players were weak connivers at fortune, Jarnegan now stood alone. As unmoral as an eagle, and as ruthless, his eyes were equally as sharp.

Falon often declared that Jarnegan could see in back of him. In an industry in which nearly everybody gave the lie to evade the truth, Jarnegan was brutally direct in speech. Except to young women, his word, once given, was never broken. In this also was he the master of his environment. Having bulged up from less than nothing himself, he retained, in spite of an absolute cynicism, a streak of kindness for the underlings of life. He concealed it, however, with the gruffest of exteriors. Few people, and those young women mostly, were ever able to get close to him. In speech, in outward action, he gave evidence of hating the mob. But he depicted the individual members of it on the screen with compassion and understanding.

"I should have been a writer," he once said to Falon—"then I could play with their cheap hearts on paper." And then with a deep sigh, "But, damn it—I can't spell two words."

He once talked a long time to an old lady

who played as an extra. Her shoulders were bent—her face trouble-corroded. Falon took her home that evening and casually inspected her miserable lodgings. Jarnegan sent her a pension of thirty a week afterward. With grateful heart the old lady tried to obtain an interview with him. He would not see her.

Once in walking along Main Street with Falon, a drunken and crippled mendicant approached him. Falon looked quickly and saw Jarnegan's tight mouth tremble at the edges. He put a gold coin in the man's hand and pushed him away, saying, "Why do those crummy bums pick me out?"

Falon, in getting the set ready for his master, was perspiring freely. Oblivious of everything but placing extras in proper positions, he hurried here and there as though everything on earth depended on his actions.

Above, like immense bees, the incandescent lights hummed in monotone.

Men wheeled heavy lights around the set.

In one corner on a raised platform two camera men and their assistants were busy. Canvas chairs were placed in a row. In the center was a larger one on the back of which was printed in large letters: "MR. JARNEGAN." The director often sat in the chair, his heavy hand over his eyes, unheeding all around him. Dominated by his own mood, the members of his company became quiet. Often, while the cameras clicked and the violin played, he would remain, hand over his eyes, silent.

Then suddenly he would rise, throw his right hand up quickly and say—"Cut." The cameras would stop clicking. Jarnegan would give a few more directions and seat himself, his hand over his half-closed but all-seeing eyes.

Hidden behind the palms was a group of musicians especially engaged for the occasion. Jarnegan kept on salary always an ancient violinist who looked like the pictures of Ole Bull. He walked, bent over, with his violin.

The director's knowledge of music was intuitive and primitive like himself.

Often he would walk over to the caricature of Ole Bull and say—"Play 'My Old Kentucky Home' a couple of times—that line twice—'The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart.'" Out of a medley of popular songs he would pick one that he loved. He could never hum it right or sing it, but often, in an emotional scene he would have played —"What'll I Do?" After the scene was over he would hum—"What'll I do—do—do—do—do—do—do—when you are far away." Another of his favorites was "From the Land of the Sky Blue Water." He would hum the first line correctly and then add—

"They brought an Indian maid—
Though her life was seeped in trouble—
Her heart was not afraid."

Jarnegan of the unafraid heart always lingered on the last line.

With the group in position Falon walked toward the two extra girls. "Here, Junie dear, please—you stand over by the musicians and hear the music—that's a good girl—" Holding Dale's arm lightly—"And you, Miss Malone, please dance with—" calling a good-looking young man in a dinner jacket—"Say, Harry—come and dance with this young lady."

Indefatigable and brusquely courteous Falon now stood back and surveyed the group. "Not quite so good," he said aloud, and changed several couples.

"Please form in the center so as not to obstruct the camera view of Miss Clare as she arrives with Slokum." Then, turning to the musicians—"We want a slow waltz—play 'What'll I Do?' and put your hearts into it." Motioning to the old musician—"You take the chair next to Mr. Jarnegan's and play, too." Then a loud snap of his fingers to an assistant—"Run tell Miss Clare the

scene's ready." Holding his hand up to the musicians—"Stop playing after she arrives—begin playing again when Mr. Jarnegan comes on the set." Falon walked near Dale, fingering a green fountain pen nervously.

Pauline Clare appeared, Dale watched her closely, a vision of loveliness with sensuous grace in every line of her body. Not even the heavy make-up hid the velvety texture of her skin. She nodded and spoke softly to Falon—"Hello, Jimmy—is the King on time?"

"Yes," replied Jimmy. "He's waiting." Turning, "Go and tell Mr. Jarnegan all is ready." The assistant hurried away.

Everybody on the set became alert. The band played with feeling, "What'll I Do?" No one moved.

Jack Jarnegan appeared and stood in front of the cameras. A sardonic smile played on his thin-lipped mouth as he surveyed the three hundred brightly gowned women and immaculately groomed men. With the same

unemotional expression his eyes ran over the entire assemblage swiftly.

He walked across the platform and changed the grouping around Pauline Clare.

"Hello, Mr. Jarnegan," she greeted him cordially.

"Hello," he returned absent-mindedly.

People called him Jack everywhere in Hollywood. On the set every one called him "Mister." This was adhered to strictly.

Jarnegan was an independent director. He would sign a long-term contract with no company. He received seventy-five thousand dollars for directing each picture. If the picture was over ten weeks in the making he received ten thousand for each additional week.

He was harsh to brutality in his financial dealings with producers. "If I didn't deliver, you'd throw me aside like an empty can. So while I deliver I want mine, by God."

He always got it.

CHAPTER VIII

JARNEGAN waited while Falon busied himself on the set. His body was tense, muscular, and weighed around a hundred and eighty-five pounds. His shoulders were thrown back in the manner of one who was subconsciously warding off blows. He was about five feet ten, with long arms, and large knuckle-cracked hands.

His white flannel shirt was open at the throat. An expensive scarf was knotted low on his breast.

His deep-set gray hawk-like eyes were at once unutterably sad and piercingly bright. They were very old eyes, older by far than his years—the eyes of a man who stared at a parade of ghosts on a road of memory.

His face was cadaverous and deeply etched. It was a heavy and sad face—chiseled with determination. The corners of his mouth were drawn down, as if from carrying the

weight of early years. His lower jaw threw his face out of line—so far it projected. It never relaxed. Like the corners of his mouth it was hard set.

Jarnegan had never read a book through in his life. But he quarreled with scenario departments because they did not put enough emotion in the synopsis of the story he was to direct.

It was impossible for a person to hate him if he did not wish it. His keen sympathy and understanding broke every barrier down. He swore terribly in the most polite company. A victim of the vilest melancholy, he gave every mood full sway.

He anticipated the end of a story before it was half told. He dramatized himself at all times, and likewise everything that came under his minute observation. Life was drama to him; the background of which was youthful feminine beauty.

When a criminal was executed he would literally follow him to the end. He would

visualize the electric chair, the firing squad or the noose. He could feel the rope about his neck, the bullet drilling his heart, the current shriveling his body.

He blended a fierce humility with a fiercer pride. He was merciful and cruel, naïve and calculating. Silent for hours at a time, he would become drunk and noisy for days following. Full of hatred and pity, compassion and mockery, he was at once a great actor and horribly sincere.

He was the first director to realize the importance of more delicately shaded pantomime. He did not know that he knew it—but life to him was a series of incidents and not a plot. He visualized his whole picture before a camera turned. He spent, as a result, but little time in cutting the film. He worked like a master writer and deleted no chapters from the finished product. This kept his emotional continuity and organic balance complete. Most directors spent hours in the cutting room and sweat blood in the

elimination of scenes which they were not artists enough to eliminate before shooting. He always knew to the last detail what scenes he would take, how many actors he would use and how much money the picture would cost before a man touched a camera. But—like all great artists, Jarnegan had no rules. Had he ever considered them he would have left the description of his work to the lesser gifted people. He was guided from within. He was a dynamo of spasmodic energy when the mood rode high.

A man of no *isms*, he was tolerant of everything that did not touch his life. He knew nothing of nations or their rulers. He had never voted. Neither had he any theories about life. A cynical realist, he fought against the sentimentality that was his Irish inheritance. At times, in his cups, he ended by being that most ironical of humans—a sentimental cynic.

A seething volcano, he hid the lava of understanding deep within him.

His big head, set on a thick neck, was now covered with a mop of iron-gray hair. Unruly like his nature, it was a tangled mass. His bearing, his walk, his every attitude was impressively dramatic.

In all Hollywood no one really knew Jarnegan. He had the gift, born of the mystic Irish, of keeping shaded windows in his soul. He often hated motion pictures and had contempt for the leading people in them—laughing always at the vehicle in which he rode to success. Like all strong original men he had no time for the technique of the weaklings around him.

A sensualist and a pagan—the only things that really concerned him in the world were beautiful young women. They solaced him when nothing else could. His reward was—devitalizing them.

Having through lonely wandering years developed great powers of introspection, he knew the laws of his own being thoroughly. This gave him a fundamental knowledge of

other beings. A monument to the trials he had endured, his richest reward of life sprang from his capacity for remembered sorrow. All around him were inferior but better academically educated men who felt that their little knowledge was absolute. With a bigger brain and greater natural intelligence he avoided becoming dictatorial.

In anything not ruled by exact science he was a superior man. When he came to anything abstract he would say, "To hell with that—give it to the movie critics."

Jarnegan and Falon were the most picturesque team in pictures. Each was a vagabond at heart and each had something of a theatrical background since boyhood.

Jarnegan began as an usher in an Ironton, Ohio, theater. As a lad even, hard as granite on the surface, he absorbed everything like a sponge.

Years before, Patsy Brannigan, a young Ironton reporter, turned critic of one-night stands, had valued his opinions of players.

Jarnegan was a combination billposter and property man at the time. Brannigan was now the city editor of the Los Angeles Bulletin.

He would never dine with over four people at a table. Generally it was with one—a young woman. He had told Alice Toren much of his career. As a rule, he did not talk. His life was a large mansion into which had come at some time or another many specimens of humanity. And yet it might safely be said that there were rooms in his soul into which no one had ever entered.

Falon's mind found expression in pictures. Studio gossip, the fan magazines and stupid parties made up his life. But with all his limitations he was quite an unusual person in Hollywood—he did not discuss art. "Give them the old hokum," was his motto; "they love it."

Jarnegan, inarticulate except in pictures, and without knowing why, was mentally and spiritually restless. Life pressed on him so

heavily at times it all but smothered him. Twelve years before he had been penniless. He was now world-famous and wealthy. But nevertheless he was often lonely and unhappy in Hollywood.

He thought he found, save in his sex life, all that he wanted in himself. Life to him was a passing parade of youthful feminine beauty. All through his conscious hours he watched it.

He had never been interested in a woman beyond the early twenties. Abhorring sophistication, if the girl were too clever, he outwitted her with lies and promises of the future. In good faith the girl would make a bad bargain with the worldly wise trader.

He now lived in a large house on a five-acre tract with three Chinese servants. When drunk, or in a lonely mood, he was fond of talking to them. One, a decrepit old fellow with a pig-tail, had many a tale to tell him. One was about his own father, the twentieth in a group of Chinamen awaiting execution

who, growing tired of waiting, ran ahead of the others and laid his life-weary old head on the block.

Jarnegan often thought of that beheaded old Chinaman.

. . . . . .

The set was now ready for Jarnegan's direction. Falon walked toward his superior. All became quiet as Jarnegan surveyed the assemblage.

His left hand shot out—"Music over there—all ready—everybody—now." The music rolled over the vast room. The waltz started. Pauline Clare led with her companion.

Jarnegan soon blew a silver whistle. He raised his hand to the musicians. The music and the waltz stopped.

All turned toward him—"Don't jamb now," he commanded. "You're not a penny dance—five feet apart there—and don't look at the cameras—relax—now rea-dy—came-ra—go."

The music and waltz started. The whistle blew again.

"Say, Jimmy," said Jarnegan, "tell Miss Clare not to profile the camera too much. We all know she's beautiful. Tell her to smile more—as though she enjoyed the waltz and her handsome lover's arms. Tell her this is a ball and not a producer's wedding."

When Jimmy delivered the message, Pauline smiled to Jarnegan who returned it grimly. He looked at her for a moment and then turned and motioned to Falon, who walked close. "That blue-eyed girl in the blue dress—who is she?"

"A little girl I hired to-day," answered Jimmy. "She's from the Studio Club—Velma, my girl, 'phoned me about her."

"That so?" Murmured Jarnegan. "Graceful," he added.

Dale Malone, slightly overcome, found it difficult to breathe in the close air.

The whistle blew. The waltz started.

Something else marred the perfect mosaic Jarnegan was striving to make.

The whistle shrilled again and Jarnegan talked to the assemblage through a megaphone. Dale felt he was looking directly at her. Student of human nature he knew the power of well-placed words. When he had finished the most obscure extra felt he was responsible for the picture. He glanced kindly at the girl who had spoiled the scene. "Please be careful next time, won't you?" he asked softly. "This business will wear us all out."

The girl in the blue dress circled around in front of Jarnegan. With blood racing warmly and every nerve trembling, she felt his eyes upon her as she glided past him.

At last a smile of satisfaction touched the corners of his tight mouth. All was going smoothly. Now and then above the haunting melody and the clicking of the cameras could be heard the slight scraping of feet. Jarnegan pressed his hands and lips together and then hummed with satisfaction—

"What'll I do—oo—oo—oo-o-oo-oo
With only a pho—to—graph——
To tell—my—tr—ou—bles to——"

A slight lull in the music—the lights droned, the cameras clicked in rhythm—then the even scraping of waltzing feet.

The whistle shrilled again. A girl had fallen to the floor.

"My God—what a day," snapped Jarnegan as Falon hurried across the set, and shouted—"Bring the nurse, the girl's fainted." Jarnegan watched the girl carried off the set.

"Huh—it's the girl in the blue dress. I thought she was too graceful," he mumbled as he ran his hand through a mass of tangled hair.

The masks of merriment dropped from the ashy-purple faces of the waltzers. They stood about, the women studying their make-up, the men looking here and there with bored expressions. The fainting of an extra

girl was not important in a world of super-emotion.

The girl was laid on a cot behind the palms.

Falon returned to Jarnegan. "She'll be all right in a minute," he volunteered.

"Keep her over by the palms and put her partner out," snapped Jarnegan.

Falon walked over to June, the freckle-faced girl. "You stay close to your friend until the scene is shot. Mr. Jarnegan is liable to be concerned about her. You never can tell."

"I will," said June.

Jack Jarnegan blew the whistle again.

"Come on, now. Everybody in their places. Let's get it this time. They'll think we're slower than Stroheim if we don't." He motioned with both hands. "Lights—music—camera—come—come," he said quickly.

Jarnegan thought he saw an extra girl in a blue dress being carried past him as the waltz started.

"Poor kid—" he mumbled. "It must be tough on women at times in this game. She's a little blue beauty, too." He brushed the thought aside, his eyes following Pauline Clare's sensuous body for a few seconds. "Poor Pauline," he thought—"there was nothing like her a few years ago. The most lovely body I've ever seen." A smile came again to his thin lips as the perfect picture of the ballroom scene rolled into the cameras.

Around and around the graceful waltzers went, while Jarnegan's lips parted with satisfaction over his big white teeth.

The cameras clicked in monotonous rhythm—the music played in a haunting cadence.

Jarnegan clapped his hands together.

"Cut," he snapped to the camera men—then louder, "That's great—fine—fine, everybody—" he shouted. "I knew we'd get it."

Turning to Jimmy Falon—"Where's the kid who fainted?"

"Over behind the palms on a couch," his assistant director answered. "She's all right now—beautiful girl, isn't she?—I never saw a niftier. From Ohio—Mr. Jarnegan—Portsmouth, Velma told me."

Jarnegan frowned. "No wonder she fainted. That's a hell of a town to be from."

"She's not acclimated yet, Mr. Jarnegan. She's only been here a short time."

Jarnegan started as if he would go to Dale. Another mood came to him.

"Have her come to-morrow," he said. "Put her under the palms. If she's from the Studio Club, she needs the money. But don't tell her I said a word. Send her home in my car and give her a full day." He paused a second. "Call lunch, too, Jimmy. Everybody on the set at two." He raised his hands as a signal for recess and walked alone to his office with shaggy head bowed and eyes half closed and heavy shoulders stooped like a man on the way to the gallows.

CHAPTER IX

DALE and June continued working several days after the ballroom scene was finished.

"Gee—your faintin' was a streak of luck," June told Dale, "but don't let on—if Jarnegan thought we noticed it, he'd have Jimmy fire us both—he's that way."

The girls were used as "atmosphere." Falon, under Jarnegan's orders, stationed Dale as near to him as possible. Dale watched the director with naïve admiration. The director, conscious of her presence, studiously ignored her.

The picture was completed late on Saturday afternoon. Jarnegan stood behind the cameras when the last scene was shot, his eyes bloodshot, his manner weary—"Thank Christ that's over—take it away." All sighed with relief.

"It's been a hell of a grind, people—makin' the Jews rich—but I thank you all. Go and get drunk, everybody—I know damn well I will—come on, Jimmy."

Jarnegan looked at Dale with penetrating eyes, as if he had just noticed her. He stepped toward her——

"Are you feeling better?" he asked tersely.

"Very much—thank you," she answered, while Pauline Clare and the entire company looked on.

Dale's body tingled in his presence.

It came over her that perhaps June had painted him with harsh colors.

"It's too bad you fainted, my child—I'm sorry. Fainting is for old women. They should faint and go to Jesus on a breeze—but not you." He turned and walked quickly from her—Falon after him.

"God-damn—what a girl, Jimmy." The turbulent Jarnegan shook his head. "Damn it to hell—I no sooner get through with one

than I meet another I like. But this one's a doll—how those eyes and that dress match. It was nice to have her around—just to look at her. I wonder if between you and Velma you could fix something up for me—well—well—oh, to hell with it all."

Jimmy made no answer as they walked in silence to Jarnegan's office.

The director threw himself in a heavy battered upholstered chair with "Christ—I'm glad that's over, Jimmy. It was sure a hell of a siege. It's grief getting anything more out of Clare—she's all dried up—not a shred of emotion in her. I had to insult her to get her warm enough to do the last scene. And then they tell the boobs over the world that personality registers on the screen—pure bunk for dago section hands and traveling salesmen."

"Well, Pauline used to be good, Mr. Jarnegan—before she got nuts on you."

Jarnegan frowned.

"Maybe so—but now she's as cold as a Christian girl doing an all-night stand with a Jewish salesman."

He frowned again.

"Besides, it wasn't me she was cuckoo about. She wanted to be a star. I paid her damn well for all she ever gave me. She's all in, anyhow. A beautiful shell. The ocean's full of them." Turning to Falon, "What the hell eats you, Jimmy—you're always feeling sorry for people. Clare's as selfish as a tomcat with a new dame at midnight."

Long experience had taught Falon that now the picture was done, Jarnegan would rave and curse him for a day or a week—and get drunk perhaps.

They sat for a long time in silence.

"Clare's slipping, Jimmy—sure as hell she's slipping. The poor devil—not a brain in her head—chin beginning to sag—blue puffs under her eyes—a little heavy—the poor bum! I wish my next picture with her

was done. I've promised to direct 'Suffering Wives' with her in the lead."

Falon watched a drooping American flag above the main office. Dusk turned to darkness, and the flag was lost to his view.

An electric bulb in an old-fashioned lamp-post slanted a shadow through the window. It fell across Jarnegan's face, and made the lumps in his middle jaw resemble pieces of stone the sculptor's chisel had missed.

His wrist watch could be heard ticking.

His mind still on Pauline Clare, Jarnegan continued—"But I'll make her emote or I'll break her God-damn neck."

"Well, you've never failed yet, Mr. Jarnegan—you drag the stuff out of all of them. When they get through with you they're limp as rags."

"Yeap—" Jarnegan smiled at the compliment—his big teeth shining under the light—"you're damn right they're limp when I get through with them—as limp as rags in an old dishpan—they're all a bunch of cheap

kitchen mechanics, anyhow. If they had any brains they wouldn't be actors—that goes for the whole damn tribe of them. A kid or a dog can act as well as any of them. It's a child's business. The women are smarter than the men in this game—and all you can do with women—is use 'em in a pinch."

Jarnegan patted his feet on the rug.

"The hell of it is I burn myself out making the dumb beasts register anything. I have to play their part and direct, too."

In an effort to get the director's mind away from Pauline Clare, Falon asked, "Did you ever think how far we've traveled, Mr. Jarnegan, since those days at the Pioneer—or how far you've traveled—I mean—you brought me along."

"Yeap—I think of it, Jimmy—when I can't help it. I don't like to think of the past. That's for women and scenario writers. The past hurts—like a boil on an acrobat's rump."

Jarnegan's mood softened——

"But you've been a great helper, Jimmy.

Remember the time we sold the gold-headed cane to the pawnbroker on Main Street—and how he wanted to charge us twenty per cent —and I threatened to bust him on the nose. And remember the big steak we had at the Good fellows Grotto after that—ho ho——"

Jarnegan rose—and hummed——

"Them were the days when a lady was a lady—
And a gent was a perfect gent."

Then with hands in his pockets, he paced the room.

"We've got a lot to remember, haven't we, Mr. Jarnegan?"

"I'll say we have—Jesus, but you were on the bum when I first met you, Jimmy. You were so down and out you thought a ham sandwich was a senator's dinner."

"I'll say I was—every time I see Bellers now I think of that cane I copped from his dressing room," laughed Jimmy.

Jarnegan roared—"God, that's right—I forgot about old Bellers—wasn't it five we got for the cane? Old Bellers used to walk around like an English duke and the old devil wasn't eating much more regular than we were—and you copped his cane—you dirty bum—" A happy pause. "Well, he'd never have bet a dime we'd be where we are—poor old Bellers—he was the rottenest make-up actor on the lot—and by God he got a national rep as a great make-up artist. You can't tell about the public—they're damn near as dumb as the sapheads who write about pictures. You should be at the Algonquin in New York, Jimmy, when the movie writing saps come in. They sit over'n a corner like bums at a wedding feast—and nobody'll talk to them—they're too dumb to realize how dumb they are."

Jimmy Falon's mind was in the past.

"But if there wasn't saps we wouldn't be where we are, Mr. Jarnegan. Remember the time you went to soak the camera and the Jew

wouldn't take it and you hit him with it—and he started to run out from behind the counter for the cops and you stuck your foot out and he tripped over it and you cracked him while he was fallin'."

Jarnegan stopped walking.

"Jesus, do I remember it—I can hear that old yid bellering yet when I stuck my foot in his jaw and we beat it down Second Street."

Jarnegan walked again, his head down his face stern.

"You know, Jimmy—those days did something to me—the early days here in California—nothing else ever hit me harder—the damned eternal sunshine and the flowers growing—and me hungrier'n a reformed street-walker on Easter Sunday." He walked swiftly—as if to keep pace with his thoughts. "I don't hate Jews—but I do hate pawnbrokers. It's the same thing, I guess. Christ, the days I soaked things out here with pawnbrokers were terrible. The yids love to

kick people when they're down. But next to the Irish, they're the world's greatest boot-lickers when people are up. They've got Ingersoll watches where their hearts ought to be."

He stopped, legs apart, and looked out of the window. "I'll never forget the time I roomed over the pawnshop on Los Angeles Street. There were two boards out of the floor under my bed, and I could hear the shonnikers jewing the poor devils down 'til they nearly gave their stuff away. Nobody but a Jew or an Irishman can run a pawnshop, just the same as nobody but a Jew or an Irishman can produce pictures—no one else has the heart."

"You're sure right, Mr. Jarnegan," said Jimmy, pleased with the conversation. "Remember that little jockey who worked with us and how he kept sayin', 'I ain't never missed a meal yet, but I've sure as hell postponed a few.' I saw him down on Main Street the other day as he was going in a

pawnshop. Velma had to go to a dentist and by the time I got back he was gone."

"Sure, I remember him," answered Jarnegan. "He was a card and a good guy. I remember him givin' that old nigger woman a dime on the set that day. He could act, too. It's a funny thing in this game—the extra people can act better'n the stars."

Seeing his chance, Jimmy asked, "Do you think Velma Irvin'll ever get anywhere, Mr. Jarnegan?"

"Not in the direction she's going," snapped Jarnegan.

"Well, she's got something to give," said Jimmy.

"You're getting nearly all she's got to give," Jarnegan smiled. "Sometimes I think she's too bright to play in pictures. It's a dub's game. But then I don't know. Many a dub wins out, too. Anyhow, all the hokum in the world is to keep heart in the dubs. They need it."

"That's a tough creed, Mr. Jarnegan."

"All truth is tough. But I hope I'm wrong about Velma."

"Well, I don't know about that, Mr. Jarnegan. She's the most loyal girl I've ever known. She sure plays square with me. She wouldn't look sideways at another guy."

Jarnegan smiled.

"Never make a definite statement about a woman, Jimmy. You may be wrong." Jimmy ignored the blast at his faith.

"Did you always feel that you'd make good some day, Mr. Jarnegan?—even when you were the come-on guy with the medicine faker?"

Jarnegan stopped suddenly—almost defiantly. "I'll say I did—and long before. I never doubted myself. I've got a streak of madness in me—always have had—and madness has faith. I'll never forget the day I sold myself to old Isaacs to direct 'Nude Women.' I made that old Jew cry like a baby. And speaking of Jews—there's a white one. He's got a family and a bunch

around him that's as dirty as geese—but he's a white old man—and what a hell of a way he's traveled since he ran that magic lantern show in Cleveland." Jarnegan half smiled, "I like old Isaacs—damned if I don't. I like the way he calls me Irisher and tells me he won't give me my price—but he always does.

"That little old weazened yid's got a heart like a mountain. I'll never forget the time I mixed his drinks and got him lit like a synagogue—he cried in my arms and told me he loved me. The dirty old hypocrite." Jarnegan's mood was softer.

"The old boy's been mighty good to you, Mr. Jarnegan," put in Jimmy.

"Well, he should be," returned Jarnegan. "I've made him a million dollars since he gave me my chance. That was nerve, Jimmy—wasn't it? Remember how I waited for him four hours and buttonholed him as he was going to lunch? His fat old frau nearly went crazy waiting for him—but by God I

sold myself—and I didn't have three dollars to my name." Jarnegan's voice rose exultingly, "I stepped right up from being a cheap assistant to direct a picture that cost half a million. There isn't a man can match that in all this game—but then hell—there's no big men in the damn game. I rather like old Isaacs—he should be with Ringling's as a freak. He's a white Jew," Jarnegan chuckled.

"Do you really hate Jews, Mr. Jarnegan—or do you just kid them?"

Jarnegan turned full face to Falon.

"I hate anybody's who's in power. I don't want any one to have the least string on me. Some Jews have a lot of feeling—a devil of a lot of it. I hate the Irish worse than the Jews. I hate the world at times—but I don't hate it nearly as much as I pity it. I wish to Christ I was big enough to wear it as a watch fob. I'd pawn it for ten dollars and get drunk on the money. That's all it's worth." Jarnegan snapped his fingers, and resumed:

"But most of the Jews in this game will double-cross you every chance they get. Look what they did when I got word that the Warden at that Eastern pen would give me every facility to make a great prison picture there. I told the Jews in power at Great-Art—and what did they do but call Lonny Williams, a cheap director, in and send him there to see the warden. He asked for me, but Williams gave him some stall and he made the picture —all because he'd do it for twelve thousand when I'd have seventy-five. They were so dumb they tried to save sixty-three thousand and lost half a million. After they got their piece of junk I saw Williams and he showed me a platinum watch they bought him. I looked at it and said, 'Well—that makes you one of them.' After the picture was done it was so rotten they wanted me to go to San Quentin and make some different shots to bolster it up. I told them to go to Jerusalem and let the two thieves down and glue themselves to the crosses in their place. The Jews in this

game are so shady they could keep the sun out of Palestine. Believe me—Jimmy—I know——"

Falon's mind veered to Velma Irvin again. "Tru-Art's about to sign Velma for stock—two hundred a week," he said.

"Tell her to take it and thank God," returned Jarnegan.

A long silence was broken by Jarnegan. "What was that girl's name who fainted the other day?"

"Malone—remember I told you she was from Portsmouth. I thought you'd be glad to know her."

"That's a damn poor reason for being glad to know anybody," snapped Jarnegan.

"But don't they call you the leading citizen back in Ironton?" Jimmy bantered.

"Yes, but the blue noses don't mean it. I'm a shanty-Irish who made good, and they don't like it."

All was silence until Jarnegan blurted out —"God, but that girl was beautiful—I

didn't think there was as pretty a little broad in all Ohio."

"She was a pip," said Jimmy, smiling, "and she looked clean—like a new cake of drug-store soap."

Jarnegan's face clouded with desire. His eyes narrowed in concentration. He was silent a long time.

CHAPTER X

VOICES could be heard indistinctly outside. The darkness became deeper. The shadow of the barred window on the floor resembled a prison cell. Jarnegan traced the shadows with his foot and said:

"I'll tell you what would be a great stunt, Jimmy—take a girl like that kid in the blue dress and make her fall in love with you—then make her suffer like hell and keep her a virgin. She could play in a couple of pictures with all that emotion breaking her heart like an egg inside." Jarnegan paced the room swiftly. "My God, what an idea," he exclaimed.

"I'd call it murder, Mr. Jarnegan. All the damn films ever made are not worth a chambermaid's soul. Besides—if you fooled with that girl you'd forget about art under

the moon some night. A little tragedian tried that and all he got was a dumb fat Mexican girl and a baby."

Jarnegan sneered.

"Don't be sentimental, Jimmy. The tragedian's a cheap skate—always was. He never yet picked a woman that wasn't tripe. He hobnobs with fakers day in and day out, and cheap little New York writers who make him think he's a philosopher. If he's got any more brains than a floor clerk, I'm the dove that lit on the Holy Ghost." Jarnegan's last words were sharper.

"I know," placated Jimmy, "it really is a wonderful thought, Mr. Jarnegan."

"Well, I must have my dreams," returned Jarnegan.

"How's Daisy Carol getting along, Mr. Jarnegan?"

The director, surprised, answered: "She seemed better last night. Her aunt was worse, though. The old dame's about to cash in at the gate."

"That's too bad," added Jimmy.

"Yes—it's too damn bad. I never could understand that aunt—dragging the kid around the studios the way she did. It's a hell of a mess now. If I were Bernard, I'd get bit by a snake and crawl under a bush and die."

Jarnegan looked hard at Falon and rolled the words in a torrent from him.

"*Bernard* was always a double-crosser. I worked my head off assisting him on three pictures. He told me he'd go to the front for me, but he never did. Then when I went over his head and got to Leedman myself, Bernard got a knock in ahead of me. Leedman made me wait four hours and said—'No—no—there's not a chance to direct for you—you've not had nearly enough experience.' He left me standing there like a dub. I felt like murder—and it's a good thing Leedman beat it. I did practically all Bernard's directing on the three pictures—and he's never turned out any like them—even if

he wouldn't give me screen credit. Well, that's when I got sore and sold myself to old Isaacs, and it wasn't long 'till Leedman sent for me. I went over and he let me right in, and I said quick—'I've just got time enough to tell you to go to hell, Leedman, and take Bernard with you—So long!' When I finally did direct for Leedman, I stuck him plenty. But I don't care so much about that—Bernard's not big enough to hurt me—nobody is—*much*—but it's not fair to steal little girls out of cradles. There ought to be some rules—*maybe*—but Bernard don't seem to think so. Why, little Daisy's not fifteen—it's a rotten, dirty shame." Jarnegan started pacing the room again.

"Is it as bad as they say, Mr. Jarnegan?" Jimmy asked solicitously.

"Well, the baby'll never be born, but it threw the kid into galloping consumption. And now the aunt's romping to the grave with double pneumonia. Sometimes I feel like smashing Bernard's jaw."

"Have you seen the kid lately?"

"Yes, I have. But don't say a word, Jimmy. I go over two or three times a week, and I send one of my Chinks every night. The poor kid cried the last time I talked to her. The little fool nearly made me break down. I don't want any more tears in mine. By God, I've had enough. She lay there in the bed—her little cheeks sunk in—that used to be so pink, and she said—'Jack—don't leave me—you big bear.' Then I saw her face twitch with the awfulest pain—and she grabbed her side. Christ—what a world! I could make a better one myself on nigger gin."

He rubbed his temples. "That kid'll get somewhere as an actress if she lives. She's one of the few who's got a great soul burning up—schools don't give it to you—by God, you're born with it—it bounces out of the centuries and hits you in the nose. Remember how Duse looked when we saw her last

spring—a ghost of a woman—but my God—what feeling! And after all, Jimmy—never forget it—feeling's the biggest thing in the world. That's what puts me over—the other birds imitate—but they've got the shells of souls in Jewish graveyards."

Jimmy held his face in his hands as Jarnegan walked swiftly up and down the office.

"Something's always happening in this town," blurted Jimmy. "One thing's no sooner stopped than another breaks out. Do you think the papers know this?"

Jarnegan sneered—"Every paper in town knows it, Jimmy dear—don't fool yourself. Not a one is game enough to tell the truth. I know three critics who get a salary from the producers for boosting pictures they don't even go to see. They're a lot of fifty-cent women in dollar sporting houses."

Falon looked at Jarnegan as the light slanted on him. He seemed taller than he really was, and his shoulders, though broad, were grotesquely so under the weird light.

At the end of a nerve-racking day, his nerve force had hardly been tapped.

The night watchman opened the door. "We're still here," said Falon. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Jarnegan." Neither man answered as the door closed.

"Yes, sir—" continued Jarnegan—"if Daisy pulls through I'll make her the greatest actress on the screen in a year. She'll make Pickford look like a cheap ad in a Sunday paper. Mary never did have anything but two dimples and a lot of luck. Daisy's the comer. When she did child stuff five years ago she was the best little cryer in Hollywood. The kid's got feeling—a barrel of it."

Anxious to switch the conversation, Falon cut in, "Velma told me last night the little girl who fainted was a writer. She asked me if I'd help her get a job. I told her I'd ask you."

Jarnegan looked at Jimmy with half-closed eyes. "What did she ever write?"

"I don't know—Vel just said she worked on a paper in her home town."

"Well, I don't believe in encouraging people to write. This town's full of lousy writers now. Not one of them can tell a story—besides—a girl that's pretty wasn't made to write. She was made for arms, by God—nature knows her business—she gives them beauty till the boob is trapped—then they have a flock of brats and become women of the wide-open spaces. I like 'em young, by God. That's all there's left in the world—youth—that's what we're all after—who the hell likes dried peaches—not even the preachers—every now and then one of them runs away with a young sister of the congregation and does it in the name of Jesus. What a fake the whole business is—you eat your heart out for a dame and you get her and you're sick of her in a week. Once the fort surrenders it isn't the fort you wanted—the door's too big—or it lies still like a log—or something—there's always something wrong.

I've rambled over this world from hell to breakfast—I've drilled over the roads of Spain—I seduced a little Spanish girl in a meadow one night. I was on the bum once in Ireland and I tried to pet a nun I'd begged. She thought I was a missionary, I guess—she gave me a prayer-book. It wasn't a book I wanted. I wish I could get one beautiful Jane and hold her—and keep her that way—but then, damn it, pearls get black and women get old——"

"But you can't sleep with a pearl," snapped Jimmy.

Jarnegan laughed outright—"God, that's right—the old boy's getting witty." Then he frowned—"But dammit, Jimmy, I'd rather sleep with a pearl than an old woman."

"Sure," said Jimmy, "so would I—but then there's a lot of young ones left—and you always have more than your share, Mr. Jarnegan—you're a hound for punishment."

Jarnegan looked at his assistant.

"Now that wasn't nice, Jimmy," he said—

"Call me a hound for beauty—call me the hound that never catches up—call me the hound that bays at the moon when the sun goes down—say my mother was a prostitute in London and slept with the king—say my dad was a pawnbroker who traded her a dollar watch with a broken mainspring for a moment's joy—but don't call me that." Jarnegan clapped his knuckle-cracked hands together at the finish, and looked at his wrist watch by the slanting light.

"Lord, it's late, Jimmy—and I've got a dinner date. Tell the Chink to bring the Loco right away."

"He's right outside, Mr. Jarnegan—I heard the machine a minute ago," said Jimmy, opening the door.

Jarnegan paused—"Now listen, Jimmy—I'm kidding in earnest—have Velma or somebody fix up a date with me for the kid. Tell Velma not to peep to Cherry—she may not understand. Velma does."

"All right—I'll do what I can," returned

Jimmy, as Jarnegan climbed into the limousine.

"Get in touch with me to-morrow, Jimmy."

"I will, Mr. Jarnegan," answered Falon, as the machine started.

CHAPTER XI

JARNEGAN lolled in his car and attempted to pull his expensive scarf into place. It knotted too soon and he immediately took hold of it with both hands and tore it from him as one would a string. "To hell with the damn thing. Who the hell started wearin' neckties, anyhow? Some damn cake-eater." He twisted his shoulders —"By God—another picture like that and I'm a dead Irishman." He groped in the side-door pocket and found a silver hip flask. He switched out the light in the limousine and drained the pint contents of it. He shook his head violently—"The damn stuff 'ud kill a dead nigger over again, but it's the best I can buy. That bootlegger should be a producer—he's a crook." He rubbed his eyes as the liquor stabbed his brain. "Now where the hell am I going? I don't wanta

go to no damn dinner. That's all the damn boobs do here." He thought seriously.

There was some chemical in Jarnegan which made him suffer torture every time he drank too much. But disregarding suffering he would remain drunk for days at a time. During such periods his mind would be an apparent blank motivated always by the cunning of the underworld. The Chinese were his favorite people. Always when drunk for over two days he went to Chinatown in San Francisco. There he found a certain peace in the temperaments of the yellow citizens. The wild battler of storms was too shrewd not to know the futility of battle.

"Hey—" he yelled.

The Chinese chauffeur turned quickly and slowed the car.

"Is that all the drink you got in this damn car?"

"No — no — Meestah Jarlegan — otheh side," he motioned with his hand.

Jarnegan pulled out two pint flasks. "Ha—ha—here's oblivion for directors and convicts." The first flask rattled down his powerful throat.

He sputtered, wiping his mouth with his knuckle-cracked hand. "Holy God in purgatory with indigestion—what a lousy drink—Jesus Christ, it's worse'n a fat whore with asthma." He threw the empty flask on the floor.

The imperturbable Chinese grinned at his master's mood.

Jarnegan's forehead shot with pain.

"God-damn—I hope I'm not started again—by God I won't get drunk to-night—just half drunk—I'll control my head if I have to crack it open." He rubbed his temples. His eyes closed—he mumbled—"What a hell of a thing directin' is—writin' in sand with your own heart's blood—the first lousy little tide and it's all washed away—you make a barrel o' money and then you die and you're forgotten—" He chanted:

"An' the worms crawl out and the worms
crawl in—
God, what a hell of a mess you're in—
They eat your ears an' they crawl in your
eyes
An' they lay their eggs up an' down your
thighs—"

His eyes opened. He leaned forward and put the last pint to his lips.

It gurgled noisily down his throat. Streaks of pain began at his temples and met at the back of his head and then ran down his spine —"Jesus God—what a no-good son of a gun I am—everything I touch turns to ashes—I wither the roses, by God—I'm a soul on fire —I'll die unsatisfied. I'm an over-sexed tart and my husband's a eunuch." The names of different girls rushed through his mind—Ethel Slayden—Cherry Lindal—Mary Regan—Hope Devine—Arvie Alan—Pauline Clare—his mind lingered on Pauline—"Maybe I'll go there—No—I've seen enough

of her—I wanta forget the picture." Evelyn Wells—"Neat little widow— No—I'd have to hear her poor kids—time to get up before they get to sleep—the brats—she thinks she's so much—she ain't the only mother on the screen. Daisy Carol—poor kid—I can't get maudlin now—" Velma Irvin—"That's a good kid—she's out with Jimmy to-night—poor old goofy Jimmy—he believes in Santa Claus an' everything—" he laughed at the humor of it. "Dawn, but I do like that girl—she's so God-damn noble—'All I want is you, Jack—you're the biggest tree in the woods'—that was nice—never complains—never asks—always wants to buy me little things—that damned geologist struck pay-dirt when he grabbed her—didn't have brains enough to know it—nice of her to say—'Taught me to appreciate you, Jack—the big man was coming down the road and I didn't know it, Jack— You were throwing apples at the moon, Jack, and I could hear them rolling down the craters—

Lord, I'd have been happier in old Missouri if I knew I was ever going to meet you, Jack —just for a night—a year'— Gee, she's a nice kid—got the most musical laugh—" He commanded:

"Drive home." The driver nodded.

Jarnegan with mind alert— "It'd be a great idea to breed beauties on an island—me owning the damn island. I wish to hell I was in some business that taxed my mind. This damn directin' a kid can do. God, I mustn't get drunk to-night. I damn near died last time—ten days—the Chink's mixin' drinks and rollin' cigarettes—women comin' and goin'—men all around—the damn place was a joint—they even drank the vinegar—came to the eleventh day stunned all to hell —but never again."

His mood becoming lighter, he chanted merrily—

"My name is Sam McCall—
And I come from Donegal—Donegal.

Oh, my name is Sam McCall—Sam McCall—
And I'm the greatest stud that ever had a stall—
Had a stall—
Oh, I kicked the boards all out,
Then I let out such a shout,
Now I have no stall at all—stall at all.

"There can be no need for stalls
When the grass of green fields calls—
Green fields calls—
Oh, the mares they laugh and sing
At the joy I always bring—
Damn it all—
Damn it all—
Damn it all—

"Oh, when I was just a gal
My mother and my dad—
Had to put me in a tent away from all—
Away from all—
For they knew when I'd discover
The spring joys of every lover—

It would be the last of any gal from Donegal—
Donegal—

"And when Barnum came to Dublin—
He my father kept a-troublin'
To make a circus freak of Sam McCall—
Sam McCall—"

The car jolted and the singer plunged forward.

"You Chinese pig-tail!" The driver grinned, face forward.

Jarnegan saw the lights of his mansion through the trees. The chauffeur drove slowly around the winding road.

His mind in a whirl, Jarnegan went up the stairs, thinking——

"Now what will I do?—the house's like a morgue full of dead Irish."

Charlie, the decrepit, opened the door.

"Listen, Charlie—you and Confucius come to the library. Bring some drinks—tell the boy to wait with the car—take him

down something." Jarnegan walked down the hall and paused, his shoulder touching a frame which held a picture of a dozen sheep bleating and freezing in the snow. Two dogs awaited the end near them. The frozen death was everywhere. Through the fleecy vapor could be seen a snow-mantled cross on a hill. It had appealed to the terrible irony in Jarnegan. He had bought it while drunk.

Unmindful of the picture, he stood, head down.

"'Phone Cherry, Charlie—send the boy —no—send a taxi after her—I don't want my car around that Studio Club any more."

Charlie shuffled away, saying—"Vely—vely well."

Unmindful of tapestries, pictures, rugs, he hurried to the library. Reaching there, he picked up a book from the table. He looked at the back of it and threw it from him. He looked into the crackling log fire as Confucius entered with a tray on which were liquor and ice.

"Pour me a drink quick, Fuke—" he commanded.

The lad poured the liquor. Jarnegan gulped it.

He poured another. Jarnegan drank it as quickly. He took another from Confucius and gulped it in a swallow. He sputtered and reached in his hip pockets for his handkerchief.

Something crackled in one of them. It was a badly bent letter. He opened it—and read the words written in a childish sprawling hand:

"Dear Big Jack:

"I had the loveliest dream 'bout you last night. I was so tired I couldn't sleep for a long time. Then all at once I snuggled close to you—just like by the side of a mountain in the sun. I was so warm. Then I woke up and you wasn't here. The nurse said you'd been here while I slept and gone. Shame on you!

"Honest, Jack—what I've always told you is true. Honest to God it is. I couldn't help myself. He nearly killed me, Jack dear—you don't know how he hurt me. But, anyhow, dear big bear man, the doctor says I'll soon be all right if blood poison or something don't set in. Jack, dear, I don't love no one but you. How could I? Why, after you go away even the doctor looks like you——"

He folded the letter and looked at the fire—then tossed it on the blaze. "Poor little Daisy," he sighed, and turned to the liquor again.

With passion riding high in head and heart, his magnificent body burning with the fever of it, and brain churning in alcohol, he traveled back again to bridges forever crossed——

—Cherry Lindal in New York—everybody's plaything. He recalled the night he met her—five years ago. A savage humor

came over him. Five years ago—he resented the passage of the years. A little mahogany clock chimed the hour. "Take the clock out o' here, Fuke." The obedient servant took it away.

Jarnegan mused—Would a day ever come when he couldn't enjoy a beautiful girl. He shuddered and picked up another drink. It was more pleasant to think of Cherry. It was a damn shame the way he neglected her—she was still a kid—a lovely little damsel—she was the hit of the Follies when he picked her up—used her and broke his word—a damn shame—too charitably inclined, the kid was—accommodating little pullet—laid to help the roosters out. He smiled grimly.

Cherry had gone out of a dry goods store into the Follies. She had also gone in and out of three hospitals in two years. "The poor little gump," he thought.

Her father was a junk dealer—her mother a wornout Basque gypsy turned Christian

Scientist. "A peach of a combination," he mused.

His mind shifted to the little Spanish girl he had loved in a meadow. Spain rolled, a pageant of beauty before his eyes. The memory of the girl lulled him for a moment. He was a wanderer again in a canvas caravan on a sunlit road in Spain.

He reached for a drink. The Chinese stood motionless near the tray.

"Ho, ho, Fuke," he laughed—"Catch 'em young—treat 'em rough—tell 'em nothin'—take 'em where you find 'em and leave 'em where they lay."

Cherry, like many other girls, fascinated Jarnegan when in the mood. Her singing and dancing made something from the far centuries clutch at his Gaelic soul. He had often made her whirl about—nude—in a mad Romany fandango. It was the gypsy in Cherry he most loved. She always made the mistake when with him of trying to be proper.

But Jarnegan had smashed her. After a few wild months with him it was long before she danced to music again. He went to New York and put her on an allowance of fifty dollars a week. She then came to the Studio Club, and with dazed heart and brain tried to gather the ruins of her broken life around her.

A few wrinkles gathered about her eyes. That was all.

Jarnegan, indifferent, disdainful and brusque, had often told her that she was part of his life. A natural psychologist, he allowed women every illusion. But Cherry was merely a little depot on his stormy road.

Cruel as he was, Jarnegan was the only man who had brought anything—even chaos—into her life.

"God—am I crazy—what the hell—hey, Charlie," he yelled. Charlie shuffled into the door. On his yellow face was no care. No wind of passion blew through his brain. His immovable expression—carved by the yellow hand of centuries, brought a glint of

momentary peace to Jarnegan. The director looked at his servant, who in many things was his master. But Jarnegan was aware of that. He said—with a touch of surrender in his voice—"Charlie, I'm tired—I've got broads on the brain again—" Then—the old determination returning——

"Get Cherry here quick——"

Charlie made answer, "She be not here to-night, Meestah Jarnegan. She oveh sick girl's house. She tol' 'nother girl tell you if you call she be 'way to-night. She come to-morrow. Girl vely sick."

Exasperated, Jarnegan turned away—"All right. Lord—somebody's always sick—this damn world's gettin' to be a hospital."

He turned in a flash——

"Get Velma on the wire—tell her Jack Jarnegan wants to talk to her."

Charlie was gone.

In a moment he returned.

"She waitin'."

Jarnegan picked up the telephone.

"Hello—Velma—Jack talking—how are you, kid—that's good. Listen, child—I'm marooned up here—you've got a date—Jimmy told me—we finished to-day—another work of art—yes—sure I'll use you in the next picture—you have my word for it—we'll write in a part for you—" He stopped while Velma talked.

"But, Velma—I want you to do something for me— Bring that little girl up with you—you know the one—Malone—I think her name is—the one that worked with us this week. We'll make it a foursome, kid—we'll all four go an' have dinner somewhere—'phone Jimmy—he'll understand—all right—all right—ask her now—" Another wait. Jarnegan's face became softer. "She'll come, huh?—that's good—I'll have Charlie send a taxi for you right away."

Jarnegan turned from the telephone and rubbed his hands with satisfaction—"More than one way of killin' a cat—by God," he said.

His manner changed. His lips became tighter—his face sterner. Save for the eyes, which were tormented, he was impassive.

All thoughts of Cherry had vanished.

"I've got to impress this little girl—great God, how beautiful—let's see—Portsmouth—a lousy town—who do I know there?—I'll draw her out—I've heard of her people—she'll give me the cue—writer—that's right—I may talk about that—spring about ideals in pictures—'bout girls bein' as safe here as anywhere else in the world—even more so—will explain about how hard stenographers have it around business men—she's probably Catholic—she'll fall for the one faith stuff—will tell her how I used to serve the buck at the altar—I'd better not say buck—she'll think the priest's a goat—will show her the pictures an' the books—I'm supposed to have everything here—got all of Dickens—I'll tell her about my loneliness—they love that—tell her I'm still in search of the ideal woman—she'll think she's it—oh,

hell—I'll make out all right—I've never flopped yet." He shrugged his shoulders confidently and reached for a drink.

Noting Confucius was not in the room, he yelled, "Hey, Fuke—take the dead away." Confucius hurried in for the tray. "Bring my lounging robe—quick," Jarnegan called after him.

He put on the robe and walked to the front entrance where Charlie stood expectant. After a short wait a machine was heard outside.

"Bring them to the library," Jarnegan said softly.

He seated himself before the fire and waited. Presently the curtains parted and Falon stood with the two girls.

"Hello, Jimmy—my boy—hello, Velma." He stook back with elegant manner—awaiting a formal introduction to Dale.

Velma stepped forward and introduced them.

"Yes, Miss Dale—I recall you on the set.

You have a fine screen appearance. I saw the rushes in the projection room yesterday. You stood out splendidly," Jarnegan lied.

Dale blushed. "Thank you, Mr. Jarnegan—you were awfully nice this week."

"I'm very glad. I try to be civil—but you know—with a picture in one's head—and all the details—well, I don't know what I'd do without my trusty general-in-command here." Jarnegan turned to Jimmy. "But won't you be seated?"—he motioned Velma and Falon to chairs and took Dale's arm. Her body tingled under the heat of his touch. He caressed her shoulder in the most gracious manner as she seated herself. Once again her body responded unconsciously to him.

"I just arrived at the club in time to save you a taxi bill, Jack," said Jimmy, smiling.

"That's fine," laughed Jarnegan—"you always did save money for the producers—Will anybody have a drink?" He pressed a button.

"Charlie—" he held up his hand. The

servant nodded understandingly. Presently he arrived with a tray.

All were certain of a drink but Dale. The two men looked at her. Velma looked at Jarnegan. Their eyes met.

"I'll fix you a small drink, Dale—you don't need to explain—do you like ginger ale?—All right, I'll fix a weeny teeny bit of scotch in it." She mixed the drink daintily. As she leaned over the tray Jarnegan noticed her form outlined in a sleeveless, tight-fitting red satin dress. Dale's eyes followed Jarnegan's to the slender scarlet loveliness of her body.

The three drank nonchalantly, then looked at Dale courteously. She sipped her drink, making a naïve picture before them as she did so.

"God—it's wonderful to see innocence and beauty in Hollywood," said Jarnegan, looking at her admiringly. "Why couldn't we have met in Ohio, Miss Malone?—no—

no—" he shook his head, "that's an empty dream." He looked at the fire.

"But I was busy in Ohio—and I must be—fifteen or eighteen years older than you. Battlers age quickly and I'm a man of many battles."

Jimmy stepped away with Velma.

"The lad never fails me," thought Jarnegan. "I've got to get him a job directing—and I hate to lose him—who the devil could take his place?" Turning to Dale——

"Do you love Ohio?"

"Yes—and no—I'm glad to be away now."

"So am I," returned Jarnegan. "It was a jail to me—in more ways than one. Are your parents living there?"

"No—they're both dead. Father died a short time ago, and I decided to come here."

"Wasn't his name Jerry Malone?" Jarnegan guessed.

"No—his name was Patrick," answered Dale, with slight amazement.

"I think I remember him. I used to go to Portsmouth quite a lot some years ago."

"I've heard him speak of you," Dale said.

Jarnegan laughed. "A lot of people speak of me back there. I'm the boy they thought was a plug and I won the race—but some, of course, don't speak so highly."

"Father always spoke well of you—I remember a winter evening when he talked a long time about you—something in the paper brought it about."

"Why didn't you come up and talk to me about Ohio on the set?" he asked.

"How could I?—" she hesitated. "I was afraid of you." Dale flushed. "You're so different now."

"Never be afraid of me—I've never bitten but one person—and he didn't die."

Velma and Jimmy could be heard talking —far off.

Dale smiled.

With quick intuition he observed that Dale liked him. A law greater than herself had

decreed that—the thing for him to do now was to be gentle—she had just lost her father. From out of the deep well of his life he dipped a drop of pity—poor kid—it was lonely as hell when a fellow first hit California—something melancholy got him—he remembered.

He stood—back to the fire—arms folded—the heavy shoulder muscles bulging his silk robe.

Dale, hardly up to his arm muscle, felt a strange sense of protection—the uncontrollable urge in her beautiful body.

"Do you know the Brannigans—from Ironton?" he asked.

"I've heard of them both. One of them is here on a paper, isn't he?"

"Yes—Patsy—" answered Jarnegan, "the *Bulletin*."

There was a pause. Dale rubbed her forehead.

"Did the liquor bother you?" Jarnegan asked solicitously.

"No—" laughed Dale, "it just made by head tingle a little."

"I wish it did that to me—it starts earthquakes in my head." As Dale looked at the fire, the director noticed the longing in her eyes.

He put his arms down.

"I'm quite certain I talked to your father several times in Portsmouth—he was rather a good-looking man, wasn't he—heavy set—" the director guessed again.

"No," answered Dale, "he was about as big as you. He had a wooden leg." She looked up at him— "You remind me something of him."

"Well, well—" he said—with voice soft as silk—"I hope it's a pleasant reminder." His arm went partly round her. She did not move. The keen Jarnegan read the loneliness in her face and knew she would not.

He pressed her slightly to him—saying, "Poor little girl—you need a protector—I suppose, though, you have a brave young

sweetheart back in Portsmouth—all Ohio girls have sweethearts."

Dale looked up at him—"No—you're mistaken."

"Nobody ever?" he asked—with double meaning.

"Just boy friends," she answered innocently—then quaintly, "Nobody ever else."

Feeling the battle won, Jarnegan took his arm away and asked—"Will you have another drink?"

"No thank you," she answered. "I'd better not."

He did not insist, but called to Jimmy—"Come on, folks—the drinks are waiting—Miss Malone and I've just gotten acquainted."

Velma and Falon joined Jarnegan in a drink.

"You people have eaten, haven't you? I think I'll go for a drive with Miss Malone—I'll pick up dinner along Ventura Boulevard somewhere—no mood to eat now."

Velma turned to Jarnegan—and said aloud——

"Now don't you give her my part in the next picture—will you, Jack?"

"No, I won't—I'll make the 'Seven Foolish Virgins' next and give you all a part."

Velma whispered to him. . . . "Where will you get the virgins in Hollywood?"

"We'll use a few leading men—and Charlie Chaplin," he answered.

Dale walked slowly to the door with them. Swept away by the force of his personality, she did not realize that Jarnegan had taken it for granted she would accompany him.

Once in the limousine and driving along Ventura Boulevard, Jarnegan's mood veered like an April day in Ohio. He was satisfied to have youth and beauty near him. He thought of Alice Toren—the girl at his side resembled her—save that—she lacked her gift for life. But Alice was dead. Devastated by a hundred men. . . . This girl was fresh . . . but Alice had a quality, too. . . .

The car climbed into the hills. He looked downward at the San Fernando Valley. That immense stretch of land, centuries scorched by the sun, was now like a valley distilled from the moon.

The scene touched him. He wondered where Jonathon, the Giver of Life, was—a square old man—wondered if the bank in Salt Lake would tell where he was . . . a light far up in the mountains attracted his attention . . . it must be Mount Wilson—he looked out of the window for Mars—it was red—some one told him. A piece of moon, bent like a baby's cradle rocker, pushed up from behind the mountains. Dale enjoyed the scene also. She unconsciously moved toward him in order better to view the red sickle of moon. He touched her gently and went back to his mood.

He wondered where Daisy would go if she died—maybe she'll live in the moon. Was old Jonathon right—if he was—Daisy must have Duse's soul—nope—Duse wasn't

dead long enough. . . . Maybe Alice Toren's—nope—they were too different . . . so thinking . . . he rode for a long time. When he returned with Dale to the Studio Club he helped her out and said:

"Good-night, child. . . . I'll see you again—I enjoyed it a lot."

"So did I—" Dale answered softly . . . "it was lovely."

She was long in going to sleep. Everybody in Portsmouth had told how awful Jack Jarnegan was—her Irish friends had always ended their tales of him with "him that was Jack Muldoon." But she felt otherwise. She had caught the lion in the mood of a cub. She thought of him a long time.

Jarnegan returned to his home and sat up —late into the night—drinking heavily—and wondering.

At last—he retired.

CHAPTER XII

HE awoke early. His brain beat in his head like a heart. The muscles in his heavy neck ached. He could not sleep. His ears rumbled with the noises of life.

A parade of torrid years passed before him. He was a weight-lifter again and a clown with Ringling's Circus. He was a high-diver with a carnival company. He saw his body hurtling a hundred feet through the air. He could see the galvanized twelve-foot tank of water into which it splashed. He saw himself climbing up sputtering water and brushing his long hair back. He could see the thousands of people looking at him. He lived over again the sensations of climbing the ladder—a rung at a time—pauses at each rung—the greatest high-diver in the world—all because he had an intuitive sense of

drama. He saw himself again on the three-foot platform at the top—leaning his body forward and drawing back as if in fear. He could hear the "ahs" of thousands coming up to him. He heard the shouts—"There he goes," as he went head downward. Well, he knew that other divers went quickly up the ladder anxious to have it over with.

He saw again a little girl diving comrade—a little creature with hair the color of yellow silk turned dark by the sun—a sweet runaway eighteen-year-old from the sticks of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She had never made a hundred-foot dive before—had learned to swim in the Cumberland River—a streak of mud rolling through her country. She went up with him to get used to the height on Saturday afternoon—he had been infatuated with her—he was a good man then.

Over him again came a wave of desire.

What a little mouth she had—he liked girls with little mouths—always had—it was

red—like a crushed strawberry—and when she kissed him she used to hold his head in her hands and cling to him with her lips. He remembered her passion more than all else——

He had taught her to pause at each rung—to draw back afraid at the top. God—he could see her beautiful young body yet—the little flag that was on her tight-fitting diving suit—the stripes of it held her breasts down—she had it made extra tight to hold them in place. A runaway girl and a virgin when he met her.

He saw her dive from the platform—heard the fire whistles—saw her miss the tank—and sprawl—a mass of dead beauty—with hair tangled around her— —

He shuddered in memory and ran to her—why did he always think of her when worried about anything—even in the midst of a picture he could feel her strawberry lips on his mouth—and once he had the musicians stop playing on the set—she had haunted him

all that day. Why did she appear before him now?—he would not tell where she was from —what funny whim had come over him—better to let a mother hope than know the kid was dead—hope was good for people—no hope when people are dead.

They had buried her in the town and the operator of the hootchie-kootchie show had preached over her body. She had by an instinct—even in falling—circled her body so her face and head did not hit the pavement —at least he thought she had—her face was peaceful—the hair fell about it—brown marks were above her eyes, as though the pupils shone through her white skin. He could see the crowd of carnival vagabonds about as she was lowered in the grave—he heard a few leaves rattle on the coffin—a little gust of wind rolled in a circle away—he saw a blue-jay dart into the foliage of a hard maple tree near the grave. He remembered thinking—something of her will flow through the sap of the tree next year, and

the sun will draw it to the sky. He could see the operator of the hootchie-kootchie show standing—his bald head and eagle nose and a red scar on his cheek—he remembered the old boy had wanted the little girl to do the hootch dance for him—her saying—"No, Jack—my body's only for you." Then he heard his own deep voice rolling over the sunken graves——

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

"This be the verse you grave for me:
Here she lies where she longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

When the song was over he remembered thinking what a damn lie that was—the hootch operator had taught it to him—this

kid didn't want to die—no more than he did —she was just learning the joy of life.

He remembered making the "Fire Dive" after the girl's death—tearing a hundred feet through the air in a kerosene-soaked suit, blazing downward—beating death to the water—the "Monte Cristo Dive"—tied in a sack and cutting his way out on the way to the water——

The nail mill in Ironton where he worked as a kid—shoveling the nails out of the tumblers they polished them in—eighty-four hours a week when he was fourteen years old —the raft of little Irish brothers and sisters he helped to feed on his dollar a day—the sneaking into shows by climbing up the fire-escape and prying the window open.

Finally—getting the job as usher whenever there was a show—running home from work—bathing in a copper wash-boiler—not able to move his feet—hopping into a cotton suit and running to the opera house to be there on time——

His father paralyzed on one side—walking sideways when sober, which wasn't often—glad when the old man died—all the rest of the family there yet—but his mother—she was gone—he saw her in the cheap calico dress she used to wear buttoned down the front—he heard the music in her voice—her repeating the last words of a sentence—"Jackie, are you going *away*—AWAY?"—the last two words were music. He frowned at the memory of his family.

Something wrong with the whole damn gang of them—people born bums you can't help them—no time to read their damn letters—had stacks of them—sent fifty a week to keep the house—that was enough—you can't coddle bums—they all laughed at him—never understood him—finally getting to work back-stage—then posting bills in the town—the boy who followed him about with a barrel of paste and rolls of paper on a little two-wheeled wagon——

The first season of seven months on the road with Robinson's circus—traveling out of Cincinnati with the billposters on two special cars—always ahead of the show—putting bills on barns and fences for miles around——

The winter days back in Ironton when he loafed about saloons and followed the beer collector around to get free drinks—every time he collected he treated the house—drunk as a lad—riding across a railroad trestle on a freight train—holding to the iron ladder with one hand—no chance to select pleasure in those days—he had to take it where he found it——

A winter in Butte, Montana—a pimp for one of the most beautiful prostitutes in the city. Stanley Ketchell, the great middleweight champion pugilist, had sprung out of the same red-light district. They were friends in those days—both floaters on the scummy waves of the world.

Josephine had taken an overdose of mor-

phine—had left a note—"Sorry, Jack, but one thing is sure—this will never happen again." She was slender and dark—good to look at—and had no particular reason to die. She had said a few days before—"I've always wanted to see what's on the other side, Jack—think I'll try some time." She had drifted to Butte from Ypsilanti, Michigan—from where else—she never told.

Figures out of the past strolled before him—pall-bearers of dreams and passions—forever and forever dead. They fell like shadows across his life.

Stanley Ketchell, dead middle-weight champion pugilist—with the fine figure and the great intelligent head—always having dreams and spending money like a dissolute king. Young hobo—and then sheep-herder, he had somewhere picked up fragments of the infinite. He wished Ketchell were alive now—a lover of women—and loved in turn by many of the loveliest in the land of scarlet—he had been shot to death over the country

sweetheart of a hired man on a farm—poor Ketchell—what an end?.

Then Ethel—the Irish-Indian girl—full of joy and wonder. Eyes like moisture from the blue sky—just a great feeling of kindness and love—dainty and slender—why did all his women have so much in common—it couldn't be possible he fell heavy for the same type of woman all the time—Ethel's mother ran a doss-house in Seattle. The girl had been born in Alaska—Ethel was a virgin until she was twenty-two—mother had sent her away to school. He smiled grimly at the feminine ruffians trying to keep Ethel respectable.

He thought of the negro porter whom he had ditched from the all-Pullman train in Western Kansas. The last car was pulling by them—the negro had started to swing confidently aboard—he had rattled his fist against his black jaw and the negro flopped down on the track—not even watching the

train roll westward. He spent the next night at the hobo jungles near Syracuse.

Funny break—him becoming a great director—that time he was with the theatrical outfit playing one-night stands in Mississippi river towns—he wondered where the blonde leading lady was—she was so tough she played Othello.

—He shouldn't have been a director—but a fighter—that time he knocked the pugilist out in Denver—thought he'd killed him—it scared him—brought back the memory of another fight—he covered his eyes—Ketchell had always told him he'd make a great fighter—he could hold his own with Ketch in those days—was there such a thing as a hereafter?—Ketchell would tell him if there was.

He recalled the talk he had with Ketch one night—when both were half drunk—"Well, Jack," Ketch said—running his champagne glass around the smoothly-varnished table, "I intend to leave life just

like I do a party I've enjoyed—rememberin' the prettiest woman there and a stolen kiss—maybe."

Poor magnificent Ketch—were there any women where he was?—what would he do if there wasn't? But Ketch wouldn't stay——

An owl hooted forlornly. He heard a scraping sound—the "wau—who—wau-who—" seemed nearer.

He recalled the Irish superstition about owls hooting at night.

Whispering, "My God—the owls are after me," he rose and took another drink—returning—he sat on the bed—his hairy and muscular body a nude citadel of present and vanished emotions.

Having known the worst too young there was now—everything to remember and nothing else to know.

He felt lonely.

Pauline Clare came to his mind—he reached for the telephone. She would come

—hesitating—that wouldn't do—she reminded him of work—there was no rest with her—antagonistic—she resented all other women—that wasn't right—rather selfish—other women had a right to him—besides—she was rather cold—getting worse—a nice-looking furnace—no heat inside.

He lived in his belligerent past. He shook the memories from him and rolled into bed.

Daisy Carol would soon be better—that would help— He grated his teeth—that dirty devil, Bernard—take advantage of a girl that way—after all he'd done to get her started—clothes and music lessons—encouraging her to go out with other men so's she would have poise. He grinned—she got poise all right—but God—she'd be no good now—miscarriage before she was sixteen—he'd never be able to forget that—he was funny about women—liked fruit he had sampled first—didn't want a peach that Bernard had picked—much less taken a bite out of—

he believed Daisy's story—but you never could tell about a woman—they all lied—Bernard had mistreated her—it was just like him—he was always a double-crossing dog—look at the deal he handed him———

Daisy was one kid he wanted to do something for—she had a lot of emotion—that's all an actress needed—all the rest was bunk—children could act—lot of bums—but Daisy was nice and warm—he saw her ripening on the branch and he intended to pluck her at his leisure—take her away to San Francisco—and watch the gulls fly from the Cliff House and the white boats sail on the blue water of the bay—wasn't figuring on marriage—life was only bearable if a fellow had a series of honeymoons through it—that was all there was—not another damn thing—men studied the stars because a girl wasn't near———

—He loved San Francisco—"I wanta live there when I'm old—I can always get Chinese girls—first chance—young, too—four-

teen or so—God—but Frisco's some town —wonder why I love it—maybe it's because I suffered there once—but I don't love the world and I've suffered all over the place——

Frisco was a dream town at that—loved to direct pictures there—wonder if it's because of Fanny—little married broad—beautiful little stenographer—ran away from a rich man in Omaha—married to him four weeks —mother approved of match—the runaway to Frisco—job in department store—a model —met chief floor-walker—lived with him—then fell for big buyer—disgusted with them both—came to Hollywood—met him—the love of her life—the only glance at the mountains she had ever had—so she said—strange how some men love one woman all their lives—but Fanny was worth loving—life gave her a bad break—caught him with Velma—went back to Frisco—worn out physically—got the flu—curtains for Fanny

—went to her grave once half lit—silly thing to do—nothing there but a green-gray stone——

Fanny Adams
1900——1925
—Her Trusting Husband—

The dilettante of passion rolled over. Fanny resembled Daisy somewhat—he felt his heart race fast and pressed it with his right hand—it brought death to his mind—where would he go when it was all over?—wonder if Fanny met Ketchell over across—wouldn't it be great if this was only a recess in the eternal whirl of things—then he could meet Fanny—a girl again—they could start all over—but he'd have to watch Ketchell——

The owl hooted again. His mind switched to Daisy. She'd pull through—he'd send her away to the mountains—things would never be the same—but then—that was all

right—she never was with Bernard but once —that wouldn't make so much difference— Bernard leered at him——

"I'll crack his jaw before I'm through with him——"

An ocean fog crept into the room. He heard the siren of a ship. He thought of all the far places the Pacific touched. The little girl who had spent a year in Guam—away out in the ocean—she was wonderful—had something none of the rest had—a lovely little pagan she was—trying to fit herself into a conventional world that would crush her at last—he heard the siren again—then his mind lolled to the tune of lapping Pacific waves during a Santa Monica midnight——

It became more ordered, peaceful and sad.

Slowly Jarnegan's mind traveled over the winter of the Billposters' strike in Ironton. He had pushed the death of Japper from him. But always it came back. Japper with his jaw cracked—and doubled up like a storm-wrecked scarecrow in an Ohio corn-

field. He knew that conscience was only a matter of habit. He had never for a moment felt sorry for Japper. Into his mind always came the thought—born of a psychology learned as a lad—"It served him right—he was a scab."

Members of the I. W. W. and trade unions found in him a friend. They were striking for something. It was the rebellion in his own soul that he loved in them.

CHAPTER XIII

DAWN crawled through the darkness and still Jarnegan tossed on his bed. Restless, he sat up and watched the night flee before day. The choked poet in the man reveled for a moment in the beauty of it. He threw the bed covering back impatiently and walked to the decanter of bourbon. He took two drinks suddenly, and made a wry face. Still shaking his head, he took the bottle from near the decanter and held it for a closer view. He saw a picture of a mill on a road in Kentucky. "I don't know why in the hell I wasn't born across the Ohio in Kentucky. That's the State for a guy like me to be from." He wondered why a river made a difference in two States. One was all beauty, the other drab.

"Oh, well—to hell with that, too." He drank again.

By this time all objects in the room were visible. Two nude miniature statuettes of young girls stood on a small mahogany stand. They represented in pink and white marble beauty the spirit of night and morning. Jarnegan looked at them. The hard lines softened in his face.

"Beautiful—beautiful," the words were heavy velvet. "It's all there is in the world—all there is." He carried the stand over near his pillow, and placed the decanter of whisky and the bottle between the figures. Then, like a tired boy under a tree, he lay propped on his left elbow and looked at them a long time. He wished he were a god and could breathe life into them. "How marvelous it would be to kiss them on the mouth and have them dance with joy. His strong mind nursed the whimsy. "How lovely it would be if I could create my own beauties—fashion them as I will in fifty different col-

ors. Little dreams that would never crumble and be eaten by the worms—that would never wither and be blown by the wind away. Oh, Christ, what a dream! I'd decorate them with roses and poppies and pull them out of the air with a snap of my fingers. I'd have it fixed so that if they ever double-crossed me, they'd shrivel and turn older than the Wandering Jew in a minute.

"The Wandering Jew—I wonder where he is now—twenty centuries walking over the roads of the world—an old, old man—with no girls near him—not any man deserved such a destiny. The poor old devil—walk, walk, walk with his heavy cane and his long beard and his longer nose. His mother said when she was a little girl she saw him once—resting by a little creek in a meadow in Ireland. He was stretched out on the ground with his hands folded in back of his head looking up at the sky and maybe wondering where in the hell he went from there. He had life everlasting and no girl to share it

with him. Christ must have been anemic to curse any man with such a fate. Poor old devil—Rip Van Winkle's sleep was a little nap compared to him. If he could only sleep a few centuries and let the world roll away —but no, by God—he's got to walk, walk, walk—every night at a new place. I wish I could talk to Christ—I'd slap his face till he freed the poor old Jew and gave him rest—I'd like to take the poor old devil to a sporting house and get him all fixed up."

He picked up the bottle again and put it to his mouth. Putting it back between the statuettes, he threw his arms out and lay back on the bed like a man crucified.

"What can I do from now till night—God Almighty—another day. Cherry'll come—an hour or so of her's enough—no mood for her chatter—Velma's working—" His body was warm as though naked in the sun.

"Let's see—Colleen must be sixteen, seventeen or eighteen now—when in the hell

was she born. Somebody'll get her—maybe they have already. Girls' School—ha, ha—maybe it's the principal. Two years since I saw her—like to see her again—beautiful little girl—more brains than her mother—got something from me—eyes tired like mine—full of tears at the station—'So proud of you, Daddy—so very—very proud. Why, I call myself Colleen Jarnegan Muldoon—that's as Irish as Dublin, daddy.' She stood before me—her reddish-brown hair showing under her smart turban hat. The kid has a mind—respects my moods—never cross with me—I wonder where the hell she strikes back—not a common streak in her. Jesus—she's older than Daisy Carol." His eyes became heavy. He saw a long road stretch out with tall eucalyptus trees on each side. With closed eyes he traveled along this road with the speed of light.

Worn out, at last, he slept feverishly. It was nearly nine when he awoke. The telephone bell rang several times. He heard

the doorbell ring as he shaved methodically.

Charlie came to him.

"Missy Lindal wish see you," he said.

He hesitated a moment and looked in the glass.

"Let her come in and wait for me. I'll see her after breakfast. He ate slowly, glancing at the dullness of a Los Angeles newspaper as he did so.

He wondered about Cherry. "She thinks I'm sore over last night maybe," he thought, as he went to meet her.

She smiled as he caressed her.

"Did you have a nice time last night?" she asked, with a slightly malicious tone.

"Oh, not so bad," he shrugged his shoulders. "It's a wonder you wouldn't stay home once in a while."

"I couldn't last night. Daisy Carol got worse."

"Is she better now?"

"No, she isn't."

"Worse?"

"Yes—much worse," answered Cherry.

"How much worse?" Jarnegan turned.

"A hell of a lot worse—she's dead."

Amazed, he looked at Cherry. His iron composure turned to rust.

The hurt woman in Cherry rejoiced.

Regaining control—"Well—tell it to God—I'm not the director in this case," he said, indifferently.

Surprised at the tame reception of her bomb, she smiled slowly at him.

"Maybe not—but you're the director she mentioned."

"*Mentioned*—what do you mean?" he asked suddenly.

"Oh, nothing, Jack—nothing at all. She just called your name out loud before she cashed in—" Cherry enjoyed the situation. "I tried to 'phone you, Jack—but your damn Chink gave me the high sign. The nurse told everybody, 'She yelled—"Oh—oh—Mr. Jarnegan—why did you?" Then she

fell back and kept still. It was about time.' "

Jarnegan seated himself on a leather lounge and buried his head in his hands. Cherry watched him.

"They're getting ready to nail you to the cross, Jack. It's all up. They're heating the nails so's they'll be hot when they hammer them in. It'll be the club women this time. You know what a bunch of geese they are. They'll cackle so loud that no Jew'll be brave enough to let you direct again."

Looking up at Cherry he asked quickly, "Who told you she was dead?"

"Who told me?" she fired back. "There's a headline in the *Beacon*."

"Oh, that yellow sheet—was my name mentioned?"

"Your name don't have to be mentioned, Jack. It's the kind of thing that leaks if you don't stop it. It'll be your fade-out."

Jarnegan laughed. "What a fine little

optimist you are, Cherry. I never touched the girl. I'll fight them."

"Don't kid yourself, Jack—you can't fight ghosts. It's like putting your finger in a bucket of water. You won't make a dent."

Face to face with public opinion, the ghost that haunted Hollywood, Jarnegan thought rapidly. He recalled a director who had injured himself by falling across a rail fence. He had become overfond of little girls. Then an irate mother—and fifty thousand dollars—dearly bought silence. The director went elsewhere. The rumor followed. At last, penniless, he faded from pictures.

"Well, Cherry—it's quite a mess, isn't it?" Jarnegan asked easily.

His manner touched her as of old.

"Yes—it is, Jack," she said tenderly.

"Go fix yourself a drink, Cherry—won't you? I want to think things out a minute."

He walked to a table and turned the pages of a film trade journal. Glancing casually

at reports of business done by theaters over the nation—he noticed his own picture.

"Men Who Look Up—6515 feet—Director, Jack Jarnegan. Business good. A fine special picture. Will please all who can get in. Characters brilliantly portrayed. Drama true. Photography beautiful. Universal appeal. Jarnegan at his best. Neighborhood class town of eight thousand—1100 seats—Admission, 25c and 50c."

Jarnegan smiled at another report:

"Only a Woman"—5000 feet—star cast—Director, Jeremy Sipcomb. I didn't even take in fifty dollars on this. Too slow. Good for nice sleep. Tone—OKay. Sunday—yes—after church. Special—no. Audience appeal—zero. Make good slow two-reeler. Another miss. Don't book it. Small house—town of three thousand—Admission, 20c. and 30c."

He thumbed the pages idly, his brain racing.

His women, the servants, the fine home,

the five acres, and the liquor—he'd fight it through some way. Bernard surely pulled a fast one on him. He resented Daisy—maybe she'd been with Bernard all the time—months maybe—who could tell? He was the first one that ever took her any place. He wished Jerry Brannigan in town—but Patsy would help—City Editor of the *Bulletin*. He snapped his fingers— There was a party to-night at Leedman's—everybody'd be there—Bernard, too—he could always be found where the numbskulls gathered—they'd all spend hours talking pictures—the only thing they had in their damned empty heads——

He heard a noise in the other room. Cherry was laughing with Charlie. He liked Cherry's laughter—it reminded him something of Alice Toren—or no—who was it she reminded him of—no matter—here she was—last night—he couldn't find her.

He thought of the owl—was there anything in that old Irish superstition?—it made

him pause—when an owl flies at your window and hoots—somebody dies—Daisy was dying about that time maybe—was that why he couldn't sleep?—no—he was all worked up over everything—a fellow couldn't sleep with a furnace burning in him——

Poor Daisy—she knew what it was all about now. I wonder if they'll cremate her—that's the only thing—they ought to throw her ashes over the hills so's the doves could breathe it—she was like a dove, anyhow—frailer than one. Well—he didn't cause her death—had she waited for him, everything would have been lovely—he knew three or four doctors—besides——

The doorbell rang twice. Charlie opened it. Falon stepped in. Charlie led him to the entrance of the drawing room. He walked quickly to Jarnegan.

"Well—" Jarnegan stopped, then looked at him kindly, "a tough break—eh, Jimmy?"

"Yes—a tough break."

"But it'll pass, though, Jimmy. Every-

thing does." He sighed. "The trick is to keep from passing with it." He sighed again. "Yeap—that's the trick," then slowly, unconsciously dramatizing it—"to keep from passing with it."

Jarnegan pulled his tangled hair and turned to Falcon—"It's not the first narrow escape I've had, Jimmy." He hit the palms of his hands together, as if to ease the strain, then whistled softly——

"It ain't goin' to rain no more, no more——
It ain't goin' to rain no more——"

With mastery of mind he showed his big white teeth in a smile—"I'll never forget, Jimmy, the one Irene Ellis pulled on me—we were all lit at a party and she climbed up a tree—she was going to shake hands with the man in the moon, by God—I had to go up after her—and you know, Jimmy—a drunken woman is worse than ten men—they get hysterical—well, I got her down and tried

to sober her up, and while she was still lit like a Santa Fe train going through a tunnel, I said to her—'Now hold your head, Irene, an' be a good girl an' come up to my house for dinner to-morrow night'—she hiccoughed a coupla times and said, 'You bet'—I forgot all about it—feelin' darn sure she would forget—at three the next afternoon she called up my secretary to remind me she had a dinner date at my house—and at seven—up she comes in a limousine bigger'n a battleship. She was all rigged out smarter'n Simon Legree's whip—with at least twenty thousand dollars worth of jewelry on her. I said to her—'Irene—why do you wear so much junk—why don't you wear imitations?' 'Oh, to hell with it,' she snapped—'What's the use of havin' it if you can't wear it—the other way's like ownin' a pawn shop and carryin' a dollar watch——'

"Her nerves were shaky, and I remember thinkin' then that a woman's a damn fool to dissipate—they can't stand it—I've never

known one yet that didn't rattle like an old tin can with a rock in it by the time they're thirty—you never saw a smart landlady in a red-light district go the route—well, anyhow—Irene dismisses the chauffeur—and he sure was a hard lookin' bird——

"'Why do you keep that brigand around with you?' I asked her——

"'Him—' she says, 'he ain't much on looks—an' he ain't much smarter'n Bull Montana—but, damn him—he's like a father to me—he touches me as respectful as if I was a saint—all for fifty bucks a week—an' you know, Jack—somebody who's loyal means a hell of a lot in this world when the higher you climb the more stilettos you find with plush handles——'

"'All right, Irene—I get what you mean—I got three Chinks like him—' an' I took her to the dining-room——

"We no sooner sat down at the table than Irene keeled right over—her face in the soup—as rigid as a dead broad in a melodrama

—Charlie and Confucius came—we laid her on a lounge like she was dead—I felt her heart, and it just beat—and that was all—once I thought sure as the devil it stopped—'My God—what a nice jamb to be in,' I thought—'If she bumps off in my house it's me for the tall timber without an ax'—Well, sir—Charlie an' I worked over Irene for two hours, till we got her heart beating normal—and once when we had it nearly there the damn thing nearly stopped—I saw a headline . . . something like—'Irene Ellis—world famous actress, dies in Jack Jarnegan's house—District Attorney Woolwine will investigate'—I knew Woolwine didn't like me—I'd sent some money to a poor devil of a radical he'd railroaded to jail—and Woolwine told me it was false sympathy—and I said—'Who in the hell is the judge of that Woolwine—I think the damn law this guy goes up under is the real crime'—but anyhow I saw Woolwine with me on the stand—rakin' up my past and all my affairs in this

town—" Jarnegan laughed mirthlessly——

"Irene thanked me later for bein' so good to her—but women never figure—what else could I do—I was good to myself—that's all——

"Well, we got her sitting up, and I had Fuke telephone her chauffeur—and he comes over——

"My God—you should of seen the entrance he made—He walked over to her—took every speck of jewelry off—asked for a sack—put it in—then asked for a piece of paper—took the junk from the sack—wrote an itemized list of it—asked me to sign the paper—then he signed it——

" 'You keep it here with you, Mister Jarnegan—if it should be lost or I get held up I couldn't explain'—Charlie took the jewelry—and I helped the chauffeur carry Irene to the car—she was all down and out again, but her heart beat steady——

" 'Does this happen often?' I asked the chauffeur——

"'A coupla times a week,' he answers—'I'm kinda used to it now.'

"I watched that mastodon of a man fix Irene up so's her head wouldn't bump—I saw him cover her beautiful legs in their fine chiffon stockings with no more expression than if she were a wooden Indian—and all the time she kept moanin': 'Oh—oh—oh—to hell with it—all—hell wit' it all—' in a weird sing-song. Then she came to long enough to say—'Bye, Jack—nice party—' and the ugliest man in the world drove away with her in the car.

"I walked along my gravel road through the rose bushes thinkin' of that chauffeur—he had a scar on his face bigger'n a ditch on a farm—an' his eyes were littler'n a beaver's—an' his forehead sloped back so steep a fly couldn't crawl up it—but by God—he was *all man* for all of that—I thought a long time that night about life—and wondered a hell of a lot more. . . . I wish to God I knew the mystery of it—it damn near drives

me crazy at times—who in the hell put loyalty in that go to hell chauffeur's heart—why doesn't he ravish Irene . . . maybe he does . . . who knows?" The magnificent bandit director's forehead wrinkled.

He looked at Falon. . . . "Why, Jimmy—do I always think evil—is it because they did something to me when I was a kid—or was that evil—what the hell is evil—Irene owns her own body even if she don't know how to control it——

"Anyhow—the next day was Sunday, and I left word that when Irene's flunky came for the jewels he was to see me. . . .

"When he came, Charlie brought him to me——

"I handed him a drink. He poured it down his throat like water.

" 'How's Irene?' I asked.

" 'She's better to-day. She went to Ti Juana wit' some people.'

" 'How long you been with her, Ed?'

" 'Six years—' His monstrous mouth

opened in a smile. 'She was wee little girl when I first start work wit' her—she just do comedy then—an' lots o' times no money to pay me!'

"I wanted to make him talk—I poured the liquor fast . . . then after chatting about this and that, out of a clear sky came——

" 'You know, Mister Jarnegan—Miss Irene gave me a job when I got out of San Quentin—I was a two-time loser then—my sister worked with Miss Irene an' told her 'bout me—she got me out—lotta big people like Miss Irene.'

" 'What did they send you up for?' I asked.

" 'Burglery,' he answered.

" 'The second offense?'

" 'Yes—I was a two-time loser—one more time—judge'll give me it all—*life*—I'll kill myself then—no prison like San Quentin—the sun burn hot all day—an' the big lake outside where the flowers grow in front—but it break your heart to see them. . . .

"'I worked in the jute mill four years—belts all over—guards wit' clubs—big machines roarin'—dust flyin' thicker'n fog—more noise all day than trains wreckin'——'

"'Where's your sister now?'

"'She keep house for me—Miss Irene buy little home on Boyle Heights for us.'

"'Well—well—they've bumped you—haven't they, brother—but never mind—you shoot square with Irene—and if anything ever goes wrong with her—you come to me,' and I handed him the jewelry—'Why didn't you take it the other time?' I asked.

"'It was night—an' I always leave her jewelry till the daytime——'

—"He still works for Irene, and he's going along great—saves his money—a funny world—Jimmy—a very funny world——"

Jarnegan sighed.

"Would Billings of the *Post* give you a good deal if it came to a showdown?" asked Jimmy.

"No—the louse—he'd carry his mother's name through dirt if it got a headline."

"How about Brannigan?"

"Well, you know how I stand with him. But I've been thinking a few things out. They don't think faster than me all the time. Let's see—I want to have dinner at your apartment this evening, Jimmy. Reporters may be hunting me here." Jarnegan called Charlie, who came shuffling in. "Have a complete supply of liquor and food sent to Mr. Falon's apartment—enough for half a dozen—we'll have dinner at six-thirty—" turning about, "is that all right, Jimmy?"

"Sure, it's all right," was the prompt answer.

"That's fine," declared Jarnegan absentmindedly as Cherry entered the room.

Oblivious of Falon and Cherry, his eyes followed the pattern of the rug. Both looked at him. Divining the situation, they walked toward the door.

"I want to take a long ride, kids," he said

evenly. "I'll see you at Jimmy's to-night—at dinner, Cherry—can I?"

"Yes—" she smiled.

"Bring Velma, too, Jimmy," concluded Jarnegan. "A ride will do me good. See you to-night. So long."

CHAPTER XIV

JARNEGAN went to his bedroom and called Confucius.

"I'll not go out for a while—bring plenty of hootch."

His defiant manner was thrown from him like a worn-out glove. He was now, that which women loved in him, the whipped boy who had never grown up.

Without looking for a glass he held the decanter to his mouth. "Denying would do no good," he thought—"like dipping your finger in a bucket of water." Cherry had said it— "Well, I'll leave the damned town —I'll drift so far it'll take ten dollars to send me a postal card. I'll hunt up some island in the Pacific—where the girls have yellow hair and green eyes like grass—I'll sell the shack here and leave the almost people."

He remained all day in the room drinking steadily.

He arrived at Falon's apartment two hours late. Scowling, he swayed slightly upon entering and then stood firm.

"He's in a quarrelsome mood," thought Jimmy as he greeted him with Velma and Cherry.

"Sorry—Jimmy—stayed too long over a bottle."

He looked about the room with swift eyes.

"Isn't it lovely here?" Cherry asked.

Jarnegan looked up at a yellow and black picture of the Rheims Cathedral.

"Jesus, yes—it's like a floorwalker's home. Jimmy always picks the damnedest-lookin' apartments. All he needs now is a picture of the President." He threw his hat on a lounge.

"I got a swell view of Hollywood Boulevard," said Jimmy.

"They hain't no such a damn thing," Jar-

negan tried to laugh. His servant pushed a chair forward. He seated himself and began beating the arms of the chair with his palms.

"Well, what's the latest?" he asked .

The three looked from one to another as though not knowing what to say. Then he asked:

"When's the funeral?"

"To-morrow," replied Jimmy.

"To-morrow," Jarnegan repeated. "To-morrow'll be the last of Daisy—no—yesterday was the last."

"Or the beginning," wavered Velma.

"Don't talk riddles, kid," blurted the director.

The servant announced dinner.

"I'm not hungry now, but I'll sit in and take some drinks," said Jarnegan, rising.

He picked up a paper—turned it indifferently to the dramatic page. A lead story struck his eye——

Bernard to Direct "Suffering Wives"

Tru-Art Studio Officials announce his selection.
No reason given for deposing of Jack Jarnegan.
Hint of friction in air.
Morality clause suggested.

The selection of Edward Bernard to direct the Tru-Art super-spectacle of marriage, "Suffering Wives," comes as a bomb to the entire industry. No reasons were given. It was announced several days ago that Jack Jarnegan had been given the picture. The motion-picture community is agog with speculation as to the reason why Jarnegan's name was so quickly withdrawn.

Jarnegan has long been known as the most successful director of domestic and triangle pictures in the industry. Bernard has never essayed anything higher than westerns. Jarnegan was once Bernard's assistant.

Jarnegan rose from his chair. The room went black.

"Damn his heart! I'll put him where he belongs! Can you beat that for luck? They side-track me for him! Why in the hell did that damn kid call me? I wonder if Bernard got to that nurse and doctor. What a boob I was! By God! I'll throttle him—I'll—I'll—God-damn his double-crossing soul—the dirty bitch! He's rubbed it into me enough. I'll make him forget his traveling salesman's humor—I'll run my fist through his heart!"

Jarnegan was talking aloud—the paper crunched in his hand. All three looked at him.

"Can you beat that?" he thundered. "Bernard gets my picture to direct. I'll sue those Jews—the Christ-killers! Can you beat it? By God! And the Jews make me the goat. They know I'm innocent. I never touched the kid. I even advised that damn

crazy old aunt of hers and gave her money. Somebody slipped that nurse—it was either the Jews or Bernard—they eat out of the same plate."

"They can't prove a thing, Jack," muttered Cherry.

"That's the devil of it," explained Jarnegan. "If the kid were alive, or the aunt's lungs weren't stopped. Maybe it'll be better if the aunt dies. She's liable to swear it was me. She always was crazy for money."

A streak of hysterical laughter came over Jarnegan—"I'll get Bernard—I'll get Leedman, too—I'll hold their heads together an' crack 'em like Easter eggs. I'll make a picture in the White House. They'll play extras. I'll show 'em who in hell they're foolin' with, I will. I'll make a travelogue from here to the moon. I'll make a picture of the Pope givin' birth to triplets. I'll show the Blessed Virgin conceivin' of the Holy Ghost. I'll get a picture of the marriage

license. I'll make a picture without a woman in it. I'll show the bums who I am an' what I can do—they get me started."

He walked hurriedly to the window and looked down the miles-long length of the lighted boulevard.

"Get the *Bulletin,* Jimmy—Patsy Brannigan——"

Jarnegan hurried to the telephone——

"Hello, Patsy—dash out quick. I need you. I'm at the Holenden."

"All right, Jack," was the answer.

"When Patsy Brannigan comes I want you all to go with me to Leedman's pettin' party. They won't make no agreement with me an' break it. None of their morality clause stuff on me. Look what they did to poor George Nash—got him for five years—an' he flopped an' they framed on him with a girl an' pulled the morality clause. Disrespectful conduct—the lice!"

"Bring me a drink, Fuke," he commanded the little servant who watched him with

solicitude. Confucius hurried for a drink and Jarnegan's eyes followed him.

"That Chink's a great kid—I'll make him swim to China an' get a wife for me. He'd do it, too——"

His tone changed. "Those Chinks are the only friends I got. That little devil got me a present one time, an' I know he couldn't afford it. I says to him, I says, 'Now, don't you buy me nothin'. I'm in the big jack. You guys just shoot square with me—' That old flat-footed Charlie'd eat a Jew full of salt pork for me. If I was like a lot o' these Kotex directors—buy'n bonds 'n land—I wouldn't like 'em like I do——"

He looked about.

"It's Patsy Brannigan, I want to see—we'll show 'em who can pull a fast shuffle. The Brannigans are the boys. Special Brand of Irish—Bottled in Bond. They're my pals; they love me. They know I'm a great artist, by God, and not a bookkeeper with stage experience—and I've never directed a

decent picture yet—but I know hokum drama—I can make a woman show enough of her knee to make the Pope take a walk—I know my stuff—an' they know I know it. They're goin' to give me half a million next year or I don't direct—*not me*—I'll go back to high divin' or liftin' weights—I can lift a horse, I can—I can throw a bear—I ain't a sissy director—I'm a MAN. Listen, Cherry—let me tell you something. You're too nice for me. I'd like to have you in a frame—with a mattress all around you. And you, Velma—the one peach they missed in Utah—I'd sell my interest in hell for you and rent a shack in Georgia."

Confucius stood before him with a tray of drinks. He picked up two of them.

"Pass 'em around, Fuke—I doan wanta drink alone——"

Each took a drink from the tray and sipped it. Jarnegan swallowed one after the other and snapped his fingers at Confucius, who returned with the tray. He picked up

two more glasses. He drank them—hic-coughed—and threw his shoulders back——

"Jesus, what a day this has been—you'd think I murdered the Twelve Apostles for seducin' Leedman. But they won't lick me, damn 'em—they didn't the other time an' they can't now. That little broad thought I'd go kerfluey when she took the fade-out with the kid. Now, damn her, she can read in all the papers about the guy she slipped the berries to. Hand me another drink, Fuke."

He looked at the door.

"Wait'll Patsy comes an' we'll make enough noise to pave hell a mile. They'll think we let a cyclone out of a box——"

Cherry stepped forward and took the empty glass from his hand— —

"Tha's a good kid—been a loyal little guy, ain't you, pal—my little gold digger ain't diggin' much gold—I'm a bum claim, kid—the broads got all the gold outta me early. I'd like to be nicer, kid—but you know how

it is—got to protect myself—people don't like people they can hurt—where the hell's Brannigan——?"

He held the arm of a chair. A determined expression came over his face as a message of command went from head to heart. The animation of speaking left him. A dreaminess came over his mood.

"Never let 'em tell you, people, that I ain't all right—Jimmy here knows. They can't get close to me, that's all—I got a flower in my soul an' I got a wall around it, by God. What became o' the other little kid—the one that fainted—she came out of Ohio for me, by God—the Big Cloudpusher's tryin' to square Himself for the two-spot he slipped me when I was a kid. I'm off o' Him like a dirty shirt. Stick to me, girls—we'll roll through the clouds—we'll bump into the moon—we'll gather the stars an' throw them at eagles—we'll choke 'em with stardust. I'm drunk an' a roustabout—but I love women. I'm the greatest

director in the world, and I'm a faker—I'm a wreck an' a louse and a two-tailed tiger. Things come outta the air to me—I can lift a horse or dive a hundred feet—or direct a society picture. None o' them can do that. All they can do's count money, like a lotta near-sighted bookkeepers. I'm a lout from Cork an' I got Dublin in my pocket. Have another drink, Jimmy——"

"No, not to-night, Mr. Jarnegan."

"All right—you keep sober—I'll drink enough for all the assistant directors in Hollywood——"

Confucius opened the door. A man bigger than Jarnegan entered. He was lean and tanned. His face was close-shaven and hardy. Like Jarnegan, he walked with a swagger—head and shoulders forward. The little finger of his left hand was off. It had been smashed in a nail mill. The man was Patsy Brannigan.

Jarnegan embraced him. Tears flooded his eyes.

"Hell, I'm drunk an' sentimental. Where you been, you old bum. You keep away from me like a dinin' car does a tramp—an' I get lonesome—you ol' leather neck."

"I've been busy, Jack—you know how it is," laughed Brannigan.

"Sure—that's all right—what's new, Patsy?"

"Oh, nothing—everybody's kicking the bucket in this town. Just sent a man to cover a story. Daisy Carol's aunt kicked in," declared Brannigan.

"That's good—the old strumpet," blurted Jarnegan.

"Don't be too sure, Jack. Evans came back from covering the story and told me the old girl was reported to have asked you not to start another girl."

Jarnegan stepped backward——

"The hell she was—" he snapped.

"Yeap"—answered Patsy—"of course they can't use it in the papers—very well—it's the gossip'll hurt——"

Jarnegan laid his hand on Patsy's arm. His voice softened——

"I knew you'd come, you great big roughneck. I want you, Patsy. They're tryin' to nail me to the cross. I want you to come along. We're beatin' it for Leedman's. We'll carry the chosen people out on shutters! They're blamin' me for the Carol business. It was their last chance to get me, and you know, Patsy, if I was guilty you'd know it. I wouldn't keep anything from you and Jerry. I never did it——"

He turned about.

"Come on, Jimmy, with me and Patsy. You follow with the girls, Fuke——"

"That's the stuff"—laughed Jimmy. "We'll run 'em all ragged."

A glint of humor touched Jarnegan's worried face as they left.

CHAPTER XV

THE Chinese chauffeur sat stone-patient on the seat.

"Leedman's—quick," Jarnegan ordered, helping Cherry and Velma in the car. Falon and Brannigan followed. The car swerved quickly, circled back to Sunset Boulevard. That commonplace street was now deserted and the car climbed like fury into Beverly Hills.

Nothing could be heard but the steady hum of the machine. Each man had his own thoughts. Brannigan, with the seed of a writer in his head, wondered about the mystery that was Jarnegan——

Why had he felt so certain that he would eventually make a name for himself? Other lads he knew in Ironton wanted to be expert nail workers or machinists. Why had he despised the ugliness of his boyhood?

There had to be something beyond it all, his brother Jerry contended that Jarnegan wasn't a miracle—merely a simple working out of a long line of human effort, whipped into shape in the age-gone centuries by a sprout of talent somewhere—maybe in the bogs of Ireland—that had weathered storms to grow into the oak that was Jarnegan.

He was always a lad of brain—but more than that—a great soul—a great understander—a majestic and brutally dominating personality. There was not one in his family like him—one would not think they were related—where in the hell did it all come from? He had always been the same—even as a property man when he gave him tips on shows—he had his opinions—right or wrong—and always blurted them out——

When the newspapers praised Joseph Jefferson, Jarnegan had said to him——

"Any ham can play Rip Van Winkle—

Jefferson got the breaks—Mansfield could play that and Jekyll and Hyde the same evening—Jefferson couldn't." He wasn't over twenty when he said it—and all his life had been the same. Even in the penitentiary he said to him——

"When I first came here I thought I'd release ninety-five per cent of them—now I'd release five per cent and keep the rest forever—they're a lot of dirty double-crossing sneaks and snitches."

And away further back—he had seen and heard it all from him; in the smoke and grime of the nail mill, with the broken windows that let the snow drift in on winter mornings—with the snarling and gossiping Irish family around the oil-cloth-covered table in the kitchen—in the miserable hovel that was his home—and the wife who looked down upon him and called him "shanty Irish" when they quarreled—in the wretched berths with circus and carnival—in the dusty halls at Billposters' Union Meet-

ings—diving in canvas tanks stretched across cement streets in small towns—lifting weights as "Santos the Strong Man" until his muscles creaked under them—in the ring at Denver, head battered and bloody and fighting like mad under the swish of blood- and water-soaked gloves, with the roar of the crowd surging across the ring like a storm through pines—through all of this and more he had kept terrific faith in himself. What a hell of a guy was Jarnegan?"

The car turned quickly.

The Leedman house, well lighted, stood away from the road in a cluster of high shrubbery and trees.

Jarnegan arose from his lethargy.

"We'll rush the door, boys, if they say a word. They may be on the lookout for me."

They hurried to the door and rang the bell.

A Japanese boy opened it. He looked startled and the quick Jarnegan noticed it. He put a hand on his neck and tossed him

between portières. "Lie there, you Yellow-tail, or I'll tell your mother!" The men rushed into the reception room. The two girls followed nonchalantly.

Patsy and Falon stood behind Jarnegan, who had perfect self-control. He looked about with ease. Leedman and his guests tried to hide their bewilderment. They only made it worse.

Pauline Clare stood in the center of the room, nude save for the remnants of a South Sea Island costume. The host, whom the press agents had dubbed "The Napoleon of the Films," stood near her. He had a wreath around his head, and he held his hand to his chest in imitation of the Corsican who swam to greatness through French blood. When drunk, he would adopt the mannerisms his publicity staff had told him were Napoleon's. His mania at such times for the general who went to oblivion on a night of storm with a cancer in his stomach, knew no bounds. A Hollywood bookseller

learned of the weakness and sold him an extensive library on Napoleon. Believing in reincarnation, he felt that Napoleon's soul, rolling through space and tormented with the din of Waterloo, was now occupying his one hundred and twenty pound body.

"Hello, Nap! Where's Josephine? I hope you're not cheating," sneered Jarnegan.

The house was heavy with cigarette smoke. Empty and half-filled bottles of liquor and ginger ale were strewn on the polished tables. The women of the party were semi-nude—not in happy abandon, but in middle-class vulgarity. Self-conscious before the gaze of the uninvited guests, they stood awkwardly about the room.

Bernard stood near Leedman, grotesque in his Roman costume. The smile was gone from his face. He stared at Jarnegan. A disheveled man sidled toward the door that led to the rear.

"Come back here," yelled Jarnegan, "or I'll blaze a bottle through your head."

Without a word, one of the he-men of the films slunk back.

"Call the cops if you want to—after I say my say—and they'll take the tongue-lapping gang of you."

Jarnegan picked up a bottle and glared at Leedman.

"Not one of you've got guts enough to fight! You're a lot of damn sneaks and this game's full of them."

The panic-stricken Leedman was no longer Napoleon.

"But, Mister Jarnegan—we can't afford this—it will ruin us"—he held his hands upward.

"Who can't afford it, you pawnbroker's porter? What'n hell can I lose? You'll nail me to the cross, will you, damn you? You'll send out stories to the papers, will you? You'll give Bernard my picture to direct—you God-damn brass watch? You bet I'll ruin you—every damn one of you—" He looked about at Brannigan——

"I've got the City Editor of the *Bulletin* here with me. He'll break a story in headlines and have the telegraph editor blaze it through the country if you're not careful.

"Now, Leedman, you're goin' to say that I'm to direct 'Suffering Wives' and every one of you here are goin' to sign a paper believing in me. I've never signed a contract with you—my word's been my bond—but damn you, Leedman—you'll sign a paper, now." He ordered——

"Get some ink and paper, Fuke."

They stood about the table and signed the paper.

Jarnegan handed it to Brannigan.

"Here's some good copy, Patsy," he said.

"Now, you can all squawk your heads off when I leave—but the joke's on you.

"So kick, you bums," he shouted. "You're all in a sack—and you'll all drown together if you squawk. An' you, Bernard, I'm goin' to crack your jaw! You're the guy that raped Daisy Carol—she told me—

you lousy, cradle robber. You'd run around this town and talk people into buying flowers for her, now's she's dead—you *let me* hold the sack and *I* never touched her!"

Jarnegan grabbed a bottle and moved menacingly toward Bernard.

"You're going to admit that you're the guy that ruined Daisy, or I'll bump your jaws together!"

Brannigan blocked Jarnegan—grabbed the bottle and tossed it to Falon.

"No, you don't bump his jaws—do you want to break into San Quentin for life? Hold your head!"

Jarnegan rattled on.

"You've pulled your last dirty deal on me. I directed three of your pictures and you got the credit for them. You kept me from directin' because you knew I'd do your work while you laid around with cheap women——"

The wise Brannigan let him rave.

A noise was heard to the rear of Leedman.

"Come on! Start something!" yelled

Jarnegan. "We'll all get a headline—and it'll be a story your cheap publicity pimps can't handle—I'll tear your damn house down and feed it to the squirrels. There ain't one of you that ain't a crook—nor one of you that's game enough to fight in the open. That kid's lyin' dead, and you, Bernard—knowin' in your lousy heart that you're the louse that did it—you parade here in a bearskin, you poor purple wart!"

"Get on your knees, you cradle robber, and admit the truth!"

Brannigan walked with Jarnegan to within a few feet of Bernard.

"Don't hit him, Jack. You can scare him," Patsy whispered, while Jarnegan, the master of drama, yelled:

"Down on your knees fast—or I'll send you to join Daisy—the little kid you got me blamed for——"

Bernard hesitated.

"On your knees," snapped Jarnegan, as he jolted him under the heart.

Bernard fell on his knees.

"Own up," yelled Jarnegan. "You ruined Daisy, didn't you?—fast—fast—I'll knock your head off if you don't own up by the time I count six—one—two—three—four——"

"I—I—I—did it—Jack," Bernard panted.

"Get up, you dog—or God'll think you're prayin'," sneered Jarnegan.

The dismayed Bernard arose with trembling knees.

Turning to the group and pointing his finger at the reincarnated Napoleon, he said—"Now, you bunch of geese, you all live in glass houses, you can look through the roof and cackle to the moon. And you—you little Napoleon's pimple—how about the little dumb script girl that killed herself on your account—huh, let me ask you—who's going to direct 'Suffering Wives'—you just got one answer——"

"Why, you are—Mister Jarnegan—that vas all a meestake—really—truly—on my

vord of honor. I vouldn't think of no other director, but you, Mister Jarnegan. That vas all a meestake—I assure you."

The great producer rubbed his hands together while the uninvited group looked on with varying expressions.

"Rub your hands till they bleed—we've got the round robin—and if Patsy's fired tomorrow, some of his friends'll break the story—you can't shut every paper up," thundered Jarnegan. "You're an organized gang of hypocrites—you'd pull the morality clause on your players just to get a chance to break contracts you don't like——"

"Forget it, Jack—what's the use—this story'll go the rounds and counteract the Hollywood in an hour—and they can't make a peep," said Patsy Brannigan. "Let's go."

"Why, Jack?" said Pauline Clare, holding out her hand.

"Tell it to Leedman—I'm through!"

As the small band left, Jarnegan slammed the door—and laughed loud at the stars.

LILIENTHAL